

**AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE EMERGENCE AND
GROWTH OF MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM IN INDIA
(1st Century B.C. – 6th Century A.D.)**

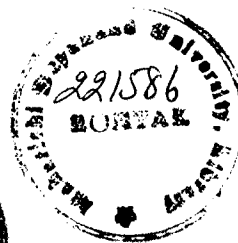
**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO MAHARSHI DAYANAND UNIVERSITY,
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By

PHAN DONG THIEN

Under the Supervision of

PROF. NEELIMA DAHIYA



**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
MAHARSHI DAYANAND UNIVERSITY
ROHTAK-124001 (HARYANA)**

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MAHARSHI DAYANAND UNIVERSITY, ROHTAK

Dr. Neelima Dahiya
Professor of History (Rtd.)

Dated: 01-09-2011

CERTIFICATE

Certified that **Phan Dong thien** has completed his thesis entitled “**An Analytical Study of the Emergence and Growth of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India (1st Century B.C. – 6th Century A.D.)**” under my supervision and guidance. To the best of my knowledge and belief it is his original work and fit for evaluation for the award of Ph.D. degree.

Supervisor

Neelima Dahiya
01/09/2011
(Prof. Neelima Dahiya)

Head of Department

Amar Singh
01/09/2011
(Prof. Amar Singh)
Prof. & Head,
Deptt. of History
M.D.U., Rohtak

Research Scholar

Phan Dong Thien
(Phan Dong Thien)

PREFACE

The Mahāyānic emergence and growth is considered as an important historical event in ancient India. Many scholars assert that Mahāyāna Buddhism emerged and grew during the time of Kaniska (1st B.C. – 1st A.D.). Whereas, another set of scholars maintains that Mahāyāna Buddhism took shape and expanded in India during the time of Mauryas – Sungas (3rd B.C. – 1st B.C.). Two Kharosthi inscriptions, which have been discovered recently at Swat and Taxila, show that Mahāyāna Buddhism had a firm footing in North-western India before the time of Asoka. This view is further strengthened by the fact that during the reign of Han Ming Ti (1st A.D.) in China, Kasyapa Matanga and Chu Fa Lan brought the Sūtra in Forty Two Sections (the basic sūtra of Mahāyāna) to China and translated it at the White Horse temple at Loyang. It is also noted that the central Asiatic oases such as Yarkand, Khotan, Kashgar, Tashkend, Turfan, Miran, Kuccha, Qarashahr, Tung Huang, etc became the centres of Mahāyāna Buddhism during the time of Kaniska (1st B.C. – 1st A.D.). Moreover, the Prajñāparamitā sūtras are said to be composed in the second century B.C and the Avataṃsaka sūtra appeared during the first century A.D.

On the basis of above facts one could infer that Mahāyāna Buddhism had emerged during the third century B.C and flourished during the periods of Sungas, Sakas, Kusānas, Sātavāhanas and reached its climax during the time of Guptas.

It is generally accepted that Mahāyānism developed from Mahāsaṅghika school that branched off from Early Buddhism after the second Buddhist council about 110 years after the death of Buddha. Though Mahāyāna Buddhism came into existence before the time of Asoka (3rd B.C.), but in the beginning it had no subsects. Towards the second century A.D, Raturabhadra (Nāgārjuna's master) founded Madhyamika school in Anga country and towards the end of the third century A.D., Maitreyaṇātha (Asanga's master) founded the Yogācāra school.

Mahāyāna Buddhism is considered as the most progressive school in thought as well as in practice in Buddhism. The appearance of Mahāyānism is seemingly a cultural and ideological revolution in ancient India. Mahāyāna Buddhism rose to

redress the weaknesses of Hīnayāna doctrines and to induct the progressive ideas in Buddhism. In the philosophical sphere, Hīnayāna only talks of the conventional truth (*samvṛti satya*), while Mahāyāna introduces the concept of absolute truth (*paramārtha satya*) in Buddhist Philosophy. Though in Upanisadic thought the concept of absolute truth already exists but the Mahāyānist concept is different from Upanisadic concept.

The thinkers of the Upanisads assert that the Absolute is eternal and unchangeable and it is God who created the universe by his *māyā* (power). While, Mahāyānists assert that if the Absolute is eternal and unchangeable, all external objects would not spring from the Absolute, exist, and return back to the Absolute after their dissolutions. Mahāyānists re-assert that the Absolute exists according to cause and conditions though it is not created by material elements. Mahāyānists also reject the role of God in the creation of the universe and they emphasize that God is only a personalization of the creative power of the universe by which all things in the universe have been created.

In the field of psychology, Hīnayānic sects only mention six consciousness of sense organs (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, bodily and mental consciousness), and two important components of psychology – *manas* and *ālayavijñāna* – do not find any place in Hīnayānic doctrines. For the first time Mahāyānism introduces the concepts of *manas* and *ālayavijñāna* along with their functions in order to complete the system of Buddhist psychology.

Though the thinkers of Upanisads had highlighted the important role of *hiranyagarbha* (*ālayavijñāna*) in the creation of the universe but did not state its role in the individual cognition. According to Mahāyāna Buddhism, *hiranyagarbha* (*ālayavijñāna*) plays an important role in the individual cognition and it is the foundation of consciousness. All habits of karma and defilements are contained in *hiranyagarbha* (subtle body) and after death, it is *hiranyagarbha* will be led to the rebirth by karmas contained in it. Likewise in the fields of literature, religion, ethics, etc. Mahāyāna Buddhism not only address the inadequacies in Hīnayānic doctrines as well as in the Upanisadic thought, but also introduces some new and progressive ideas in Buddhist thought.

The existing social, political, religious and economic scenario influenced directly the emergence and growth of Mahāyāna Buddhism and vice-versa. In the time of Sakas – Sātavāhanas, all castes lived in harmony without the severe discriminations of caste; contrary to the situation in this respect during the Gupta periods. Under by Mahāyānist influence many Sūdras were granted the cultivable lands, were helped with seeds and cattle etc. by the state. Many of them worked in the productive and commercial bases of state. As a consequence some Sūdras became very wealthy too.

Though most of the rulers followed Brahmanism, they also patronized Buddhism enthusiastically. Monasteries, temples, caves of Buddhism were built by them such as the University of Nālandā was built by king Kumāragupta. They also granted cultivable lands to Buddhist monasteries with tax exemption and helped them with agricultural inputs, cattles and seeds etc. Under the patronage of Kaniska, the fourth Buddhist council was held at Kasmir and twenty Buddhist sects also took shape during his period. Most of Mahāyānic sūtras were written in Andhra country under the patronage of kings of Sātavāhana dynasty.

Before advent of Mahāyāna Buddhism, India had many religions such as Shaivism, Vaisnavism, Saktism, Jainism, and the sects of Hīnayāna Buddhism. Through the animal sacrifices, cattles that were needed for agriculture works were being sacrificed, Buddhism, Jainism and other heterodox sects stood against the Vedic sacrifices. It undermined the prestige and authority of Brahmins. Therefore Brahmanism underwent some important changes. As a consequence, Hinduism was founded in order to save the situation. Hinduism was only the outward change but the faith and observance were not different from Brahmanism. Hinduism was only an incorporation of Shaivism, Vaisnavism, Saktism, Buddhism and various local beliefs and ceremonies of worship. Hindus worshipped all gods, and even the Buddha was worshipped by them. The blood sacrifices of Brahmanism were replaced by vegetarianism in Hinduism. Moreover, Brahmanism did not have image worship, and performed their sacrifices at fireside whereas Hindus have worshipped images of god and performed their veg-sacrifices in shrines and temples. The image worship is said to be influenced by

Mahāyāna Buddhism because before the advent of Mahāyānism, India did not have any image of god or of Buddha.

The doctrines of Hīnayāna Buddhism did not cater the needs of the Buddhist in a changed scenario – a period of the social, political, cultural and economic developments, and specially when the economy of commodity occupied an important position in the social life. Speaking of Hīnayānic atheism, S.Raddhakrishnan asserts that the philosophical atheism of Hīnayāna is the skeleton in the box, the diseased worm in the beautiful flower; Hīnayānic Nirvāna is not possible for ordinary man, who falls in love with annihilation. That is the reason that Hīnayāna Buddhism could not become a popular religion.

During the period under study, agriculture, industries, handicrafts, and commerces had developed significantly. At that time, agriculture was equipped with the iron ploughshares and a large variety of iron implements. Consequently, enlargement of cultivable land was also encouraged and systems of irrigation were built. Agriculture was now a developed industry. Manufacturing activities too were quite developed during the period. Among these industries, metallurgical industry played an important role in the national economy from which the other economic activities were developed. The spinning and weaving of cotton and silk were important activities during the period of Kusānas – Sātavāhanas. The trade and commerce were developed during the period. The surplus productions of agriculture and industry resulted in the growth of trade and commerce. Many trade routes (land and sea routes) were established to connect with the important ports in the country as well as the ports of the countries outside India. Through the commercial relations with many countries in the world, India exported her agricultural and industrial products and imported from Roma and other countries raw materials for industries, specially golden and silver coins and other products such as wine, amphorae, samian ware, roulette ware, red glazed argentine ware. Through these trade routes (silk and sea routes) Mahāyāna Buddhism was propagated to Western Asia, Central Asia, and South-eastern Asia.

The period, from the first century B.C. to the sixth century A.D. is considered the heyday of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India, but after the sixth century A.D. Indian

Buddhism including Mahāyāna gradually came to decline and almost totally disappeared from India in the sixteenth century A.D. That is the reason the period from the first century B.C. to sixth century A.D. has been chosen for study. The objectives of the study are to reassess the date of Mahāyānic emergence; to bring the light to the progressive contents in Mahāyānic thought and practice; and to examine its contributions to Indian and world civilizations. It is said that the Mahāyānic appearance marks a new step forward of Indian culture and art.

In the field of literature, Mahāyāna Buddhism enriches the Indian Sanskrit literature with innumerable literary works; specially with hundreds of valuable works of prajñāparamitā literature. There are, at least, six hundred Mahāyāna sūtras which have already been found in the original Sanskrit source as well as in Chinese and Tibetan translations. Apart from these works, Mahāyānists have equipped Indian literature with five kinds of literature, viz the Negative dialectical literature, the Realistic critical literature, the Symbolic literature, the Literature of Self-Relation, and the Depictive literature. Mahāyānic literature's influence is visible on eighteen Purānas, Gaudapāda's works, Saṃkara's works, Rāmanuja's works, etc.

In the field of philosophy, Mahāyānists taught two kinds of truth – conventional and absolute truths. L.M. Joshi asserts that these two truths were firstly taught by Mahāyānic scholars like Nāgārjuna, Nāgārbodhi, Asanga, Vasubandhu etc and then the Classical Vedānta schools took this concept of twofold truth as the very foundation of that philosophy. The Mahāyānic concept of the absolute truth even influenced the thought of Gaudapāda and other scholars of Non dualistic Vedānta.

In the field of psychology, Mahāyānists analyzed eight consciousness and their functions in the individual cognition. Simultaneously manas and ālayavijñāna were added into the Hīnayānic psychology in order to complete the Buddhist psychology. Manas is an agency of will and affection without which one is not different from wood or stone. And ālayavijñāna is the subtle body that contains all habits of defilement and karma. Without ālayavijñāna, man will not have rebirth.

In the field of ethics, the Mahāyānic vegetarianism has a great influence on Hinduism. The vegetarian was encouraged by some scholars of Hinduism such as the

author of Manusmṛti (200 A.D.), author of Mahābhārata (200 B.C. – 400 A.D.) It is also said that Hinduism has borrowed the tenet of ahimsā from Mahāyāna. The doctrine of ahimsā is the principal doctrine of Purāṇas. In the field of art, all images of Buddha, Bodhisattva and gods of Buddhism and that of Hinduism appeared only after the advent of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The ancient Indian schools of art such as the Gandhara school in North western India, Mathurā in Northern India, Amaravatī and Vengī in the Southern India were greatly influenced by the Mahāyānic thought.

Generally, Mahāyānic art not only influenced Hindu art but it also influenced Buddhist art in the countries outside India.

Though after sixteenth century A.D, Mahāyāna Buddhism disappeared from India, but contrary to it Mahāyāna grew very strong in many other countries in the world. Mahāyānic doctrine has now been accepted and practised by a good number of people in China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Bhutan, Tibet, Australia, America, Europe and South Africa.

Though a few good books on Mahāyāna Buddhism have appeared but all of them are of general nature and do not deal in detail the exclusive questions like emergence and growth of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and influence of the Mahāyāna Buddhism to Indian thought and culture.

Mahāyāna Buddhism by N. Dutt (1987) discusses some points of political, cultural and religious background of Mahāyāna. And some points of philosophy such as Dharmakāya, Nirvāna, Truths, the absolute, etc are also discussed.

2500 Years of Buddhism by P.V. Bapat (1997) presents the Indian Buddhist schools, four Buddhist councils and the propagation of Buddhism to Asiatic countries. The work provides data for study of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism and its propagation to many countries in the world.

Indian Philosophy by S. Radhakrishnan (2 Vol., 1999) and **Indian Philosophy** by Sinha J. (1979), these books are very helpful for understanding. The works provide data for the relationship between Mahāyānic and Brahmanical philosophies and the reasons for the decline of Buddhism in India.

The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline by D.D. Kosambi (2008) relates Indus and Gangā civilizations, the social structure of Aryan people, the Urban Revival, the Brahmanism and its animal sacrifices, Buddhism and society, agriculture and industries in the time of Asoka, political and economic changes, etc. The work provides data for the study of political and economic background of Mahāyānism.

Studies in the Buddhistic culture of India by L.M. Joshi (1997) discusses the emergence of Mahāyāna and the development of Buddhism under the Guptas, the schools of art, and the influence of Mahāyāna Buddhism on thought, ethics, literature, art, and practice of Hinduism. The work supplies data for study of the influences of Mahāyāna on the culture, thought, and practice of Hinduism.

A Text Book of the History of Theravāda Buddhism by K.T.S. Sarao (1995) relates the social and economic conditions of ancient India, The emergence of Mahāyāna in Andhra, Royal patronage to Buddhism, the decline of Buddhism in India, etc. The work provides data for study of royal patronage to Buddhism and the decline of Buddhism in India.

The Penguin History of Early India by Romila Thapar (2002) relates to political and economic conditions under the reigns of Sungas, Sakas, Kusānas, Sātavāhanas and Guptas, the schools of art, and the propagation of Mahāyāna Buddhism outside India. The work supplies data for study of political and economic background of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Buddhism in China by Kenneth, K.S. Ch'en (1946) relates to the propagation of Mahāyāna to China, Mahāyāna Buddhist schools in China, and Buddhist art in China. The work supplies data for re-assertion of the date of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Perspectives in Social and Economic History of Early India by R.S. Sharma (1995) talks of the land grants to Buddhist and Brahmanical monks, guilds of artisans, gold and silver coins, etc. The work provides data for study of political and economic backgrounds of Mahāyāna.

Following works are some of the important primary Buddhist sources which were used for the study of the problem situation under review.

The Mahāyānic works like the **Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra**, **Lankāvatāra sūtra**, **Sūrangama sūtra**, **Vajracchedika sūtra**, **Vimalakirtinidesa sūtra**, etc provide significant data for study of Mahāyāna philosophy. **Milindapañho** gives a list of 75 occupations and guilds of artisans and craftsmen. The work provides data for study of the economic background of Mahāyānism.

The Principal Upanisads presents the concepts of Brahman, ātman, soul, God, karma, rebirth, the concepts of the world, liberation and means to the liberation. The work provides the data for study of relation between Brahmanical and Mahāyānic philosophies.

The Flower Ornament Scripture presents the concept of universe, the systems of world in the universe, the interdependence of all things in the universe, the Bodhisattva-way and fifty two stages of Bodhisattva. The work provides data for the study of Mahāyānic philosophy.

The Treatise in Thirty verses on Mere-consciousness presents eight consciousnesses and their functions, the practice of the doctrine of Mere-consciousness and the stages of sainthood. The work provides data for study of Mahāyānic psychology.

Five Pāli Nikāya, i.e. **The Gradual Sayings** (Angutta Nikāya), **The Long discourse** (Dīgha Nikāya), **The Kindred Sayings** (Samyutta Nikāya), **The Middle Length Sayings** (Majjhima Nikāya) and **The Minor Readings** (Khuddaka Nikāya) provide data for study of Hīnayāna philosophy, psychology, and the limitation of Hīnayānic thought and practice.

The Sūtra of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's Fundamental vows presents the Hells, Heavenly worlds, Rebirth, Karma and the Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's salvation of all beings from the suffering world.

The work provides data for the study of the concept of universe and the altruistic actions of Mahāyāna Bodhisattva.

The present thesis is divided into six chapters.

Chapter I '**Introduction**' deals with the emergence and growth of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, its thought and practice. The focus of discussion is on the date of emergence of Mahāyāna in India; the sects of Mahāyāna, the authors and works of Mahāyāna, philosophical thought and practice of Mahāyāna.

Chapter II '**Social and political background of Mahāyāna Buddhism**' deals with the social and political conditions of the period that led to the emergence and growth of Mahāyāna in India. The discussion focuses on five dynasties of ancient India, viz Mauryas, Sakas, Kusānas, Sātavāhanas and Guptas and their patronages to Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Chapter III '**Economic background of Mahāyāna Buddhism**' deals with agriculture, industries, handicrafts, commerce, the trade's routes and introduction of Mahāyāna Buddhism to Asiatic countries.

The discussion focuses on the cultivation of wet paddy and cereals, animal breeding, the grant of land, the developments of metallurgical and weaving industries, pottery, the relations of trade and commerce between India, Roma and other countries, the export and import of commodity, the silk and sea routes, and propagation of Mahāyāna Buddhism to Asiatic countries.

Chapter IV '**Religious Background of Mahāyāna Buddhism**' deals with the development of Brahmanism, main sects of Brahmanism, Hinduism, Hīnayāna Buddhism and their limitations. Harmonization of Mahāyānism and Brahmanism, and the patronage of Indian rulers to Mahāyānism and Brahmanism have also been dealt with.

The discussion also focuses on the philosophical thought, image worship and rituals in Brahmanism and Buddhism.

Chapter V ‘**Contribution of Mahāyāna Buddhism to Indian thought and Culture**’ deals with the systematization of thoughts of Brahmanism and Buddhism, the development of the theory of Sūnyatā and Buddhayāna, and contribution of Mahāyāna Buddhism to Indian culture and society. The discussion focuses on the Mahāyānic contributions to Indian literature, philosophy, psychology, ethics, art and painting, and influences of Indian Mahāyānic art on the Buddhist art in Asiatic countries.

Chapter VI ‘**Conclusion**’ sums up discussions held in the previous chapters and the concluding observation based on critical evaluation of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism.

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Phan Dong Thien

ABBREVIATION

ABIA:	<i>Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology Vols</i>
ACB:	ANDREW SKILTON; <i>A Concise History of Buddhism</i>
AN:	<i>Anguttanikāya</i> ; R. MORRIS, E. HARDY and RHYSDAVIDS, 6 vols
AIA:	AGRAWLA, V.S.; <i>Introduction to Angavijja</i>
AIB:	A.K. WARDER; <i>Indian Buddhism</i>
AJ:	AGARWALA, V.S.; <i>Juphs Vol IX (fig 113)</i>
AIP:	AGARWALA, V.S.; <i>India as known to Pāṇini</i>
AMM:	AGARWALA, V.S.; <i>Mathura Museum Catalogue</i>
AED:	ANSARI, Z.D.; <i>Excavation at Dwārika</i>
ASE:	ADHYA, G.L.; <i>Studies in the Economic Life of Northern and Western India (200 B.C. – 300 A.D.)</i>
BYB:	P.V. BAPAT; <i>2500 years of Buddhism</i>
BTLS:	BUNNŌ; <i>Threefold lotus sūtra</i>
BSB:	BHIKSHU SANGHARAKSHITA; <i>A survey of Buddhism</i>
BLG:	BRECHT; <i>Life of Galileo</i>
BBAJ:	BURGESS, J; <i>Buddhist stūpas at Amravatī and Jaggayyapptā</i>
DAI:	D.N. JHA; <i>Ancient India (An introductory outline)</i>
DIH:	DAMODAR DHARMANAND KOSAMBI; <i>An introduction to Indian History</i>
DCCAI:	D.D. KOSAMBI; <i>The culture and civilization of Ancient India in historical outline</i>
DDP:	DAWMYATIN (tr); <i>Dhammapada</i>
DBM:	DEBALAMITRA; <i>Buddhist Monuments</i>
DVD:	<i>Divyavadāna</i> ; COWELL. E.B and NAIL.R.A (ed)
EAI:	E.J.RAPSON; <i>Ancient India (from the earliest time to the first century A.D.)</i>
EVP:	EDWARD CONZE; <i>Vajracchedika prajñāparamitā</i>

EPL:	EDWARA CONZE; <i>The prajñā paramitā literature</i>
EB:	E.J.THOMAS; <i>The life of Buddha as legend and History</i>
FOST:	<i>The Flower ornament scripture</i> ; THOMAS CLERRY (tr)
HAL:	HART WILLIAM; <i>The art of living</i>
HDHI:	HERMANN KULKE and DIETMARROTHERMUND; <i>A history of Indian</i>
HBSL:	HAR DAYAL; <i>The Bodhisattva doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit literature</i>
JBC:	LALMANI JOSHI; <i>Studies in The Buddhist culture of India</i>
KBC:	KENNETH. K.S. CHEN; <i>Buddhism in China</i>
KHI:	K.ANTONOVA; <i>A History of Indian</i>
KTHB:	K.T.S. SARAO; <i>A text Book of the History of Theravāda</i>
KONB:	K.T.S. SARAO; <i>Origin and Nature of Ancient India Buddhism</i>
KJI:	KRAMERISCH.S; <i>JISOA Vol VII</i>
KHT:	KAX, WILSON; <i>A History of Textile Boulder</i>
KTB:	KENNETH. K.S. CHEN; <i>The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism</i>
LCZ₃:	LUKUAN YU (ed); <i>Ch'an and Zen Teaching Vol₃</i>
LSS:	LUKUAN YU (tr); <i>The Sūrangama sūtra</i>
LMI:	LUDERS.H; <i>Mathurā Inscription</i>
MAIU:	MAJUMDAR, R.C.; <i>The age of imperial unity</i>
MILC:	MOHAN, V.S.; <i>Saka in India and their impact on Indian life and culture</i>
MLP:	T.W.DAVIDS (tr); <i>Milindapañho</i>
MS:	Mahāvastu; SENART (ed)
MO:	MOTICHANDRA; Op.cit (figs 20, 21, 23, 24, 28)
MLS:	<i>The Middle Length Saying (Majjhimanikāya)</i> ; I.B.HORNER (ed)
MVS:	<i>Madhyanta Vibhanga</i> ; Th.STCHERBATSKY (tr)
MT:	MARSHALL.J; <i>Taxila 3 vols</i>
MN:	<i>Majjhima nikāya</i> ; TRENCKNER and RHYS DAVIDS (tr) 4 vols

NTAE:	NANCY WILSON ROSS, <i>Threefold path to Asian Enlightenment</i> (Vo Hung Thanh translated into Vietnamese language)
NMB:	N.DUTT; <i>Mahāyāna Buddhism</i>
NBT:	NARADA; <i>The Buddha and his Teachings</i>
RIP₁:	S.RADHAKRISHNAN; <i>Indian philosophy, vol₁</i>
RIP₂:	S.RADHAKRISHNAN; <i>Indian philosophy, vol₂</i>
RPSEH:	RAM SHARAN SHARMA; <i>Perspective in Social and Economic History of Early India</i>
RPHEI:	ROMILA THAPAR; <i>The Penguin History of Early India</i>
RAI:	ROMESH CHANDER DUTT; <i>Ancient India (200 B.C – 800 A.D.)</i>
RMS:	R.S.SHARMA; <i>Material Culture and Social Formation in Ancient India</i>
RPU:	S.RADHAKRISHNAN; <i>The Principal Upanisads</i>
RHV:	ROBERT.A.T THURMAN; <i>The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti</i>
SN:	<i>Samyutta Nikāya</i> ; FEER and RHYS DAVIDS (tr) 4 vols
SNI:	SUDHAKAR CHATTPADHYAYA; <i>Early History of North India</i>
SEK:	SHARMA, G.R.; <i>Excavation at Kausambi</i>
SAS:	SIVARAMAMURTI, C.; <i>Amravati Sculptures</i>
SEMN:	SANKALIA, H.D.; <i>Excavation at Maheswar and Nāvadātoli</i>
SIE:	SIRCAR, D.C.; <i>Indian Epigraphy</i>
SSLF:	SENCHEMURANO; <i>The Sūtra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law</i>
SIP₁:	SINHA, J.; <i>Indian philosophy, Vol₁</i>
SIP₂:	SINHA, J.; <i>Indian philosophy, Vol₂</i>
STTMC:	SWATI GANGULI; <i>Treatise in Thirty Verses on Mere-consciousness</i>
SST:	SANGHASEN SINGH; <i>Sārvastivāda and Its Tradition</i>
SEL:	SANGHARAKSHITA; <i>The Eternal Legacy</i>
SEZ:	SUZUKI.D.T; <i>Essays in Zen Buddhism</i>
SKI:	SHARMA.R.C; <i>Kusāna Idiom in Mathurā in Prāchinprabha</i>
SEK:	SHARMA.G.R; <i>The Excavation at Kausambi</i>

SEG: SINGH.O.P; *Economic Glearings from Early Indian Coins*

SEHS: SHARMA.Y.D; *Exploration of History Sites*

SPAI: SINHA.B.P; *Potteries in Ancient India*

SSLS: SUZUKI.D.T; *The Studies in The Lankāvatara Sūtra*

TSBKV: TAO TSI SHIH; *The Sūtra of Boddhisattva Ksitigarbha's Fundamental vow*

TTSV: THICH THANH TU; *Thien Su Viet Nam*

WIM: WILLIAM NONTGOMERY. M.C. GOVERN; *Introduction to Mahāyāna Buddhism*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Emergence of Mahāyāna Buddhism

N. Dutt holds that *Mahāyāna* developed from the *Mahāsaṅghika* that was branched off from the *Theravāda* after the second Buddhist council about 110 years after the Buddha's death.¹ P.V. Bapat agrees with N.Dutt's view that the doctrine of *Mahāsaṅghikas* and their offshoots contain germs from which the *Mahāyāna* doctrine was developed.² J. Sinhā³ states concretely that the beginning of *Mahāyāna* may be traced to the *Mahāsaṅghikas*, who coined *Bodhisattvayāna* that soon became *Mahāyāna* doctrine. *Mahāsaṅghika* also hinted at the idea of the Buddha-nature in all living beings and their Buddhology was developed into the *Mahāyāna* idea of *trikāya*. *Mahāsaṅghika*'s idealistic monism is the philosophical foundation of *Mahāyāna*. The concept of a transcendental Buddha in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra* was also inherited from the *Lokottaravādin* school, a branch of *Mahāsaṅghika*.

The Date of Mahāyāna

Though most of the scholars agree that *Mahāyāna* was developed from *Mahāsaṅghika*, but there is a difference of opinion concerning the date of emergence of *Mahāyāna*. Hajime Nakamura⁴ states that *Mahāyāna* Buddhism emerged at the beginning of the Christian era. And Taranātha (Tibetan historian)⁵ places the emergence of *Mahāyānism* during the reign of Kaniska and his son. And he also states that during the period, Nanda taught the *Mahāyāna* doctrine in the *Anga* country and then countless teachers of *Mahāyāna* such as Avitarka and others appeared in the different places.

Here, a hypothesis is brought out that if *Mahāyāna* Buddhism emerged during the time of Kaniska, how could Nanda teach *Mahāyāna* doctrine in *Anga* country? And

¹ NMB, p. 1.

² BYB, p. 105.

³ SIP₁, p. 370.

⁴ HIB, p. 100.

⁵ AIB, p. 355.

on what basis could countless teachers of *Mahāyāna* appear in different places? By these reasons, one can come to conclusion that *Mahāyāna* Buddhism might have emerged before the period of Asoka.

Moreover, Romila Thapar⁶ and P.V. Bapat⁷ assert that in the middle of first century, under the reign of *Han Ming Ti*, Kasyapa Matanga and Chu Fa Lan brought the *Sūtra in Forty Two Sections* (the basic *sūtra* of *Mahāyāna*) to China and translated it at the White Horse temple at *Loyang*. To Romila Thapar⁸, central Asian oases such as *Yarkand*, *Khotan*, *Kashgar*, *Tashkend*, *Turfan*, *Miran*, *Kuccha*, *Qarashahr* and *Tun huang* became the centres of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism during the time of Kaniska. It is absurd to say that *Mahāyāna* Buddhism emerged during the first century B.C or the first century A.D. If it emerged during the first century B.C or the first century A.D., Kasyapa Matanga and Chu Fa Lan could not bring the *Mahāyāna sūtra* to China during the first century A.D. And the Central Asiatic oases could not be the centres of *Mahāyāna* during the time of Kaniska. Again, Hajime Nakamura⁹ affirms that the *Prajñā paramitā sūtras* were already in existence in primitive form in the second century B.C and *Avatamsaka sūtra* came to existence before the time of Nāgārjuna, i.e. during the first century A.D.¹⁰ On the contrary, Andrew Skilton¹¹ asserts that *Mahāyāna* Buddhism was prevalent during the time of Asoka. Estimating the value of the third Buddhist council, Andrew Skilton writes: "The third Buddhist council was not the great Buddhist one for it consisted only of the *Theravādin* monks, who belonged to one of conflicting sects even the *Mahāyānists* were not invited."

Parallel with this view, N. Dutt¹² also states that in the second century B.C, the Greek rulers viz. the houses of Euthydemus and Eucratides crossed the *Hindukush* and took possession of *Kabul* and northwestern India. They were followed by Demetrius and Theodorus, who were supporters of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, as they enshrined the

⁶ RPHEI, p. 255.

⁷ BYB, p. 110.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ HIB, p. 164.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

¹¹ ACB, p. 47.

¹² NMB, p. 3.

Buddha's relics and erected sanctuaries. Apart from these, two *Kharosthi* inscriptions¹³ incised at the instance of the Greek chiefs which have been discovered at *Swat* and *Taxila*, show that *Mahāyāna* Buddhism had a firm footing in northwestern India and was promoted by the foreign rulers.

The above evidences also hold good with A.K. Warder's view¹⁴ that *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, at first, had not any sub-sect though it was present during the third century B.C. Even Asvaghosa, the famous monk of *Mahāyāna* in *Andhra* country during the first century A.D. did not establish any school of *Mahāyāna*.

Through historical evidences, one can come to conclusion that *Mahāyāna* Buddhism came into existence during the third century B.C and it flourished during the periods of Sakas, *Kusānas*, *Sātavāhanas* and especially, it reached its climax during the time of Guptas.

The Particular Features of Mahāyāna

The rise of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism effected a significant revolution in Buddhism, both in thought and practice. The term *Mahāyāna* is, literally, the great vehicle or the highest means or the complete doctrine. The new movement is called thus for universal salvation as the kernel of it. It is large enough to carry all beings to the absolute *Nirvāna* or real happiness. It invites all to aspire for the highest goal of the Buddhahood without exception of laity. Its out-look is broad and its aim is infinitely great like the infinite sky. Its capacity can accommodate various religious beliefs and popular practice. Moreover *Sanskrit* language, which is considered as the divine language of scripture, was used for its writings.¹⁵

These special features were the factors that contributed to its growth and popularity. The term *Hīnayāna* stands for the small vehicle or the imperfect means. Thus, it is called for its limitations in thought and practice. *Hīnayānists* have not yet known the essence of the world and man that is always in the state of *Nirvāna*. *Hīnayānic* doctrine only mentions the phenomenal aspects such as suffering,

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ AIB, p. 355.

¹⁵ JBC, p. 4.

impermanence and selflessness. Their main goal is the attainment of *Arhatship* that is equivalent to a *Bodhisattva* of sixth stage of *Mahāyānism*. Maitreya-nātha and Asanga assert that *Hīnayāna* is a narrow doctrine, narrow in its aim, narrow in its methods and equipments.¹⁶ Vasubandhu regards *Hīnayāna* as milk and *Mahāyāna* as the cream of milk. Without embarking on the great vehicle, the ocean of misery can not be crossed.¹⁷

Hīnayānists regard the Buddha as a historical person, the historical Gautama. Whereas *Mahāyānists* regard the Buddha as the transcendental, eternal and absolute, who saves all living beings through his triple body, *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya* and *nirmānakāya*. *Mahāyānists* believe in an infinite number of *Bodhisattvas*, who take vow to attain Buddhahood and to liberate all beings. *Mahāyānists* emphasize both the life of monk and that of householder. They consider *prajñā* (wisdom), *bhakti* (devotion) and *anābhogacaryā* (purposeless service) as the means to liberation. *Mahāyānists* regard *Nirvāna* as transcendental experience of *sānyatā* and is a positive state. *Yogācāris* believe in only mind, *ālayavijñāna*, which constructs the conditioned world. According to them, *ālayavijñāna* is real and all objects, which are manifested from *ālayavijñāna*, are unreal. *Madhyamikas* believe in *sānyatā* or emptiness which is the essence behind the impermanent phenomena and all things are the manifestation of *sānyatā*.¹⁸ Enlightenment, according to *Mahāyāna*, does not mean simply the understanding of the Four Noble Truths in their positive states but the experience of *sānyatā* or Buddha-nature that constitutes the original enlightenment of all creatures. And the Buddha is not merely the Enlightened One in the old sense but an omniscient. This is why the Buddha's enlightenment is higher than that of *Arhats*.

Mahāyāna is also called *Bodhisattvayāna*, the vehicle of the future Buddhas. The idea of *Bodhisattva* is the hall-mark of *Mahāyāna*.¹⁹ In the *Hīnayānic* doctrine, there is only one *Bodhisattva* who was before the Buddha's enlightenment; while in

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ SIP₂, p. 344.

¹⁹ JBC, p. 4.

Mahāyāna teachings there are innumerable *Bodhisattvas*, who take vows to become Buddhas in order to save all beings.

There are two types of *Bodhisattva* in the *Mahāyānic* doctrine. The former is the Household *Bodhisattva* and the latter is the Homeless *Bodhisattva*. The Household *Bodhisattva*, who lives in the family, has a duty towards parents, wife, children and society. Like Homeless *Bodhisattva*, he also observes the *Bodhisattva* precepts and practises ten *pāramitās* (perfections). Household *Bodhisattva* is considered as the protector of Buddhism. Though he lives in the worldly family, he always keeps his mind pure and tries to avoid any disturbance from the external objects. He can also attain sainthoods from the joyful stage to immovable stage of *Bodhisattva* (from the first stage to eighth stage of *Bodhisattva*).²⁰ Homeless *Bodhisattva* is one, who is dedicating his own life for the happiness of others. He is considered as the keeper of the Buddha's *Dharma*. He tries to complete his self-benefit and then to benefit others. He not only teaches the Buddhist teachings to people but he also teaches professions, medicines, arts, literatures, philosophies, psychologies, etc to them. Besides, he also gives gifts to the poor, the needy, the orphans, etc. He also constructs hospitals, schools and other welfare projects. He can attain twelve stages of *Bodhisattva*. These are *Pramuditā*, *Vimāla*, *Prabhākari*, *Arcismatī*, *Sudradjayā*, *Abhimukhi*, *Dāramgamā*, *Acalā*, *Sādhumatī*, *Dharmamega*, *Nirupamā*, and *Jñānavatī*. His highest stage is the Buddhahood (*Jñānavatī*); those who attained Buddhahood, have both wisdom and compassion.

Another particular feature of *Mahāyāna* is the harmonization of various religious beliefs. All gods and goddess of *Brahmanism* like Viṣṇu, Siva, Lakmī, Ganesh, etc appeared as the protectors of the Buddha's *Dharma* and they are called *Bodhisattvas*. In Chinese tradition, goddess Durga is considered as a *Bodhisattva* and Kali as the Black Face *Bodhisattva*, who was an incarnation of *Bodhisattva* Avalokitesvara.

On other hand, the Sakyamuni Buddha is considered as the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu by the *Purānas*.²¹ *Mahāyāna* practises the image worship and ritual ceremony;

²⁰ HBSL, pp. 284-94.

²¹ JBC, p. 8.

the images of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, gods, goddesses are the objects of worship of *Mahāyāna*. Specially, a doctrine of salvation by faith is emphasized and *Mahāyānists* use Spell or *Dharmis* or *Mantra* for attaining emancipation. Apart from these, the *Mahāyānic* doctrines such as *Sānyatā*, Buddha-nature, *Nirvāna*, *Dharmakāya*, *Maitrī*, *Karunā*, *Ahiṃsā*, etc are found in the *Upanisads*.

Moreover, the absolutic and idealistic ideas of *Mahāyāna* philosophers soon echoed in the writings of *Advaita* philosophers belonging to *Vedic* tradition.²² The kings such as Kusānas, Sātavāhanas, Vakatakas, Guptas, etc patronized for the harmonization of Buddhism and *Brahmanism*.

The Sects of Mahāyāna Buddhism

Mahāyāna Buddhism is said to exist before the time of Asoka (3rd A.D.), initially it had no any sub-sects.²³

Towards the second century A.D., Rahurabhadra founded the *Madhyamika* school in the *Anga* country.²⁴ Andrew Skilton²⁵ and L.M. Joshi²⁶ assert that the founder of *Madhyamika* school was Nāgārjuna, who was born in *Vidarbha* region of *Mahārastra* during the second century A.D. After his monastic training at *Nālandā*, he lived in *Andhra* country.

As a matter of fact, Nāgārjuna, who was Rahurabhadra's disciple, was not a founder of *Madhyamika* school. He only systematized all *sūtras* composed by some sects of *Mahāsaṅghika* and developed the idea of *Madhyamika* which was founded by his master.

Madhyamika school was followed by a galaxy of thinkers such as Nāgārjuna I (80-120 A.D.), Nāgārjuna II (or Nāgārboḍhi 2nd A.D.), Āryadeva (2nd A.D.), Buddhapālita (5th A.D.), Bhavaviveka (5th A.D.), Candrakīrti (6th A.D.), Santideva (7th A.D.) and others. In the sixth century A.D., the school was split into two sections,

²² *Ibid.*

²³ AIB, p. 355.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

²⁵ ACB, p. 116.

²⁶ JBC, p. 7.

one led by Bhavavika and other by Buddhapālita.²⁷ The term *Madhyamika* means the doctrine of Middle path, i.e. the middle between the two extremes of existence and non-existence, permanence and impermanence, infinite and finite, pleasure and pain, etc.²⁸

At first, *Mahāyāna* Buddhism had the *Madhyamika* school only. Towards the end of the third century A.D., Maitreyanātha, Asanga's master, founded a new school, *Yogācāra* school.²⁹ L.M. Joshi³⁰ asserts that *Yogācāra* school was founded by Maitreyanātha probably in the third century A.D.; but J. Sinhā³¹ holds that Maitreyanātha founded *Yogācāra* in the fourth century A.D. S.Radhakrishnan³² denies both above views and asserts that Asanga and his younger brother Vasubandhu, the teacher of Dinnāga, founded *Yogācāra* school in the fifth century A.D.

S. Radhakrishnan's affirmation appears to go beyond historical evidences because Dinnāga flourished in the fifth century A.D.; and Vasubandhu, Asanga's younger brother, who lived in the fourth century A.D., could not be Dinnāga's master. Dinnāga's master was Vasubandhu II, who lived in *Ayodhyā* during the reign of Skandhagupta (456-467 A.D.).³³ Whereas Vasubandhu I, Asanga's younger brother, the author of *Abhidharmakosa*, who lived in the beginning of the fourth century A.D. in *Purusapura*, Kaniska's capital, in *Gandhara* during the reign of Samudragupta (335-380).³⁴

According to A.K. Wander³⁵, Vasubandhu of *Vaibhāsika* school, Asanga's younger brother certainly lived not later than the middle of the fourth century A.D. Hence Maiteyanātha founded the *Yogācāra* school in the third century A.D.

Some Chinese, Tibetan, and Vietnamese scholars have misunderstood that the *Yogācāra* school was founded by *Bodhisattva* Maitreya, the future Buddha, staying in

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ AIB, p. 363.

²⁹ JBC, p. 7.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ SIP₂, p. 376.

³² RIP₁, p. 624.

³³ NMB, p. 39.

³⁴ DAI, p. 97.

³⁵ AIB, p. 424.

the *Tusita* heaven. They further believe that Vasubandhu used his super-nature power and went to *Tusita* heaven to study the doctrine of *Yogācāra* from *Bodhisattva* Maitreya. In fact, Vasubandhu, Asanga's younger brother, learned the doctrine of *Yogācāra* from his master Manonātha.³⁶ Even P.V. Bapat³⁷, in his book 2500 years of Buddhism, affirms hesitatingly that *Bodhisattva* Maitreya and Maitreyanātha, who established the *Yogācāra* school in the third century A.D. are one.

The term *Yogācāra* may be derived from the work '*Yogācāra Bāmitra*' which was written by Maitreyanātha in the third century A.D. Perhaps, the people of the school practised *yoga* therefore they were called *yogācāris*.

Yogācāris recognized the reality of external objects, which are constituted by consciousness (*viññāna*) (the seeds of phenomena – physical and mental), are unreal.

Maitreyanātha and Vasubandhu used the term *ālayaviññāna* for two truths – subjective and objective worlds. The former is basis of individual cognitions or a system of eight consciousnesses (visual consciousness, auditory consciousness, olfactory consciousness, gustatory consciousness, bodily consciousness, *manoviññāna*, *manas* and *ālayaviññāna*). The latter is the cosmic mind that contains all the seeds of material, from which all external objects are constituted.

Most of the scholars misunderstood the term '*viññāna*'; therefore they come to conclusion that *Yogācāra* school denied the external objects and reduced them to cognition (*viññāna*).³⁸ *Yogācāra*, in fact, did not deny the external objects. They only declared that the external objects, which are made by *viññāna* (the seeds of phenomena), are impermanent, changing, and perishable. In the work '*viññaptimatratāridasa sāstra*' Vasubandhu regards all external objects as the manifestation of *ālayaviññāna* (the cosmic mind). And every external object is made by *viññāna* (the seeds of material).³⁹ The *Lankāvatāra sūtra*⁴⁰, an important work of the

³⁶ JBC, p. 7.

³⁷ BYB, p. 108.

³⁸ SIP₂, p. 376, RIP₁, p. 627, BYB, p. 108, HIB, pp. 253-4.

³⁹ STTMC, pp. 115-6.

⁴⁰ BYB, p. 108.

Yogācāra school, maintains that only the mind or *ālayavijñāna* is permanent while all the external objects, which are manifested from *ālayavijñāna*, are impermanent.

The *Yogācāra* school or *vijñānavāda* reached its climax during the Gupta age.⁴¹ Maitreyanātha (3rd A.D.), Asanga (4th A.D.), Vasubandhu (4th A.D.), Sthiramti (4th A.D.), Dharmapāla (7th A.D.), Sartaraksita (8th A.D.), Karmalasīla (8th A.D.), etc are exponents of the *Yogācāra* school.

The Texts of Mahāyāna Buddhism

Mahāyāna Buddhism possesses an infinite source of *sūtras* and *sāstras*. The so-called *Mahāyāna sūtras* are, in fact, the products of the sects of *Mahāsaṅghika*. For example, the concept of transcendental and eternal Buddha in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* comes from the *Lokottaravāda*, a branch of *Mahāsaṅghika*.⁴² Edward Conze asserts⁴³ that the whole system of *Prajñā paramitā sūtras* was developed from the *Prajñā paramitā sūtra* in *Prakrit* of the *Pārvasailas* and *Aparasailas*, two sects of *Mahasaṅghika*.

According to A.K. Warder, most of *Mahāyāna sūtras* were firstly composed in the south India. It means that most of *Mahāyāna sūtras* were composed in the *Andhra* country on the *Krishna* river, near *Amaravatī* and *Dhānyakataka* (the modern *Dharanikot*), then in the west and afterwards in the north.⁴⁴ *Mahāyānist*s assert that *Mahāyāna sūtras* had been taught by the Sakyamuni Buddha⁴⁵ and most of them had been kept in the Dragon world under the earth or the sea.⁴⁶ These *sūtras* were afterwards brought to *Nālandā* where Sariputra stayed and later the great university of India was opened.⁴⁷

It is difficult to believe the existence of Dragon world under the earth or the sea because it could not be a historical fact. But the description of the location of the world

⁴¹ JBC, p. 7.

⁴² SIP₂, p. 345.

⁴³ EPL, p. 1.

⁴⁴ AIB, pp. 355-6.

⁴⁵ ACB, p. 100.

⁴⁶ AIB, p. 355.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

is not given, one could safely deduct that it probably refers to the area of *Andhra* where most of the *Mahāyāna sūtras* were written.

Again, Andrew Skilton⁴⁸ asserts that there two Buddhist council were held at the same time. The first was presided over by Mahakasyapa and the second by *Bodhisattva* Mañjuri. The first Buddhist council of *Mahāyāna* took place upon the some archetypal level of the reality at which the *Mahāyāna sūtras* themselves have been revealed by the Sakyamuni Buddha were recited but they were not collected into *Tipitaka* and which only became prominent several centuries after the death of the Buddha. Moreover, he holds that the story of Purāna at the first Buddhist council suggests one way in which the appearance of *Mahāyāna sūtras* may have happened.

Andrew Skilton's affirmation certainly does not anger well not fit with historical fact; because at the first Buddhist council, Buddhism had not any division of sects and certainly the core of Buddhist teachings were recited equally there. The germ of distinction of sects was probably appeared after the first Buddhist council. L.M.Joshi states that after the first Buddhist council closed, there were famous monks, viz. Purāna and his friends came late and after hearing what were recited again by Ananda, they did not agree with these teachings and they stated that these teachings were not taught from the Buddha's mouth.⁴⁹

There are six hundred *Mahāyāna sūtras* found in the original *Sanskrit*, Tibetan and Chinese sources.⁵⁰ According to K.Antonova, the earliest *Mahāyāna* texts would appear to have been written as far back as the first century B.C, however a large number dated the first century A.D. Some of the earliest of these writings were the *Prajñā paramitā sūtras*, Chinese translations of which appeared as early as the end of the second century A.D. The most popular works of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism were the *Prajñā paramitā sūtras*. The biggest text of this class is said to be the *Prajñā paramitā sūtra* in 100,000 slokas while the smallest is of one sloka only. There are numerous

⁴⁸ ACB, p. 100.

⁴⁹ JBC, p. 1.

⁵⁰ ACB, p. 101.

Prajñā paramitā sūtras but the contents of them could be summed up in one word, to wit, *sānyatā*.⁵¹

There are nine *Vaipulya sūtras* of *Mahāyāna* found in Nepal now. These are *Lalitavistara*, *Samādhirāja*, *Lankāvatāra*, *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāparamitā*, *Gaṇḍavyāha*, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, *Dasabhūmika*, *Suvarṇaprabhāsa* and *Tathāgataguhyaka*.⁵² Beside these *sūtras*, there are the *Sukhavativyūha*, the *Amitayus*, the *Sārangama*, *Avatamsaka*, *Vimalakīrtinideśa*, *Kṣitigarbha*, the perfect Enlightenment *sūtras*, etc.

All these *sūtras* are most important ones of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism and they have a close relation with *Madhyamika* and *Yogācāra* schools. Unlike the *suttas* of *Tipitaka* that only mention the basic doctrines of ethics, the *Mahāyāna sūtras* used symbols describing the self-nature of all things that appear to divorce from historical time and place and make the great appeal to the spiritual imagination.

Mahāyānists do not see *Hīnayāna* teaching as a hostile threat to their own beliefs or as an erroneous doctrine. They regard it as a doctrine inadequate for the broad propagation of Buddhist ideas and too individualistic. Asanga, the famous monk of *Yogācāra* school, drew attention to the limited nature of the *Hīnayāna* teachings. According to *Hīnayānic* teachings, man should be preoccupied with salvation for himself alone, the attainment of *Nirvāna* for himself as an individual. *Mahāyāna*, on the other hand, laid emphasis upon compassion that should be given to all living beings, regardless of their individual characteristics. *Mahāyānists* regard their teachings as the re-emergence of the true teachings of the Buddha, and they maintain that adherents of *Hīnayāna* school distorted and stifled the Buddha's teachings through their egoism and individualism.

The Teachers of Mahāyāna Buddhism

The most famous teachers of *Mahāyānism* in the period of study are Avitarka, Rahurabhadra, Nāgārjuna I, Nāgārjuna II, Āryadeva, Asvaghosa, Maitreyanātha, Manonātha, Asanga, Vasubandhu I, Vasubandhu II, Dinnāga, etc. Several of them

⁵¹ JBC, p. 5.

⁵² *Ibid.*

were born in the south India, studied there and afterwards went to the north to teach the new doctrine.

Avitaka was one of the earliest teachers of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. He lived in the *Anga* country in the first century B.C. The Buddhist historian Tāranātha asserts that Avitarka learned *Mahāyāna* doctrine directly from *Bodhisattva* Avalokitesvara, Maitreya and other *Bodhisattvas*. He was contemporary of king Kaniska.⁵³ Avitaka's disciple was Rahurabhadra.

Rahurabhadra lived at the time of the king Candanapāla of Apārāntaka (who may perhaps be identified with king Kaniska II). He learned *Mahāyāna* doctrine with Avitarka and other teachers. He established the philosophical school of *Mahāyānism*, called *Madhyamika* in 119 CE.⁵⁴

Nāgārjuna I, who was born in the *Vidarbha* country in *Mahārastra*, was a *Brahmin*. He became a monk at *Nālandā* and was taught by Rahurabhadra. According to legend, he came in contact with the *Dragons*, who were ready to fetch whatever he needed for the world. Finally, the king of *Dragon* invited him to visit his world; Nāgārjuna accepted the offer but returned back to the earth soon with a *sūtra* named the *Hundred Thousand Perfection of wisdom sūtra*, the culminating *Mahāyāna sūtra*. The followers of the *Hīnayāna* school alleged that Nāgārjuna himself wrote the *sūtra* supposed to have been brought by him from the *Dragon* world.⁵⁵ The *Dragon* world was probably the *Andhra* country where most of *Mahāyāna sūtra* were written. It was not under the earth or the sea.

Nāgārjuna was not a founder of *Madhyamika* school. He only systematized all *Mahāyāna sūtras* written by the sects of *Mahāsaṅghika* and developed the idea of *Madhyamika* school that was founded by his master.

He taught *Mahāyāna* teachings at many places in ancient India and constructed many *pagodas*, *viharas* and temples there. He came to contact with the Sātavāhana emperor who later became his disciple. His works are *Mālamadhyamikakārikā*,

⁵³ AIB, p. 355.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

Sānyatāsaptati, *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, *Yuktisastika*, *Vaidalyasūtra*, *Prakarana*, *Suhrllekha* (a letter to a friend). He also wrote some hymns in praise of the Buddha.⁵⁶

The main idea of Nāgārjuna is the doctrine of *Sānyatā* (emptiness), the relative and absolute levels of all principles by which he rejected all extreme views such as eternal and non-eternal, infinite and finite, soul different from body and soul identical with body, etc. According to him, suffering does not exist, therefore *Nirvāna* does not exist. He maintains that the Buddha taught the doctrine on the basis of two levels of truth, the concealing and the ultimate.⁵⁷

Towards the end of his life, Nāgārjuna returned to the Sātavāhana domains but to *Andhra*, not to *Maharashtra*.⁵⁸

Nāgārjuna II was Nāgārjuna's prominent disciple. He was called simply Nāga. Avoiding misunderstanding to Nāgārjuna I, some called him Nāgābodhi or Nāgāhvaya, or Tathāgatabhadra.⁵⁹ He is known as the author of the commentaries on some *Mahāyāna sūtras*, i.e the commentary on the Twenty Five Thousand Perfection of Wisdom *sūtra* (*Mahāprajñāparamitā sūtra*). This treatise is called the *sāstra* of Great perfection of wisdom (the *Mahāprajñāparamitā sāstra*), which exists only in a Chinese version. And his second work known as the commentary on *Madhyamika sāstra*, is called *Dvādaśadvarasāstra*, found in Chinese *Tripitaka*.⁶⁰ Like Nāgārjuna I, he quoted texts from the Early *Tipitaka* and interpreted them in the *Madhyamika* sense in order to establish the correctness of his views. According to him, the Buddha reveals the ultimate level of truth in the *Mahāyāna sūtras* while the *Tipitaka* texts which appear to speak of the concealing level of truth.

Āryadeva, who continued the tradition of *Madhyamika*, was also Nāgārjuna's disciple. He came originally from *Ceylon* and stood close to Nāgārjuna in doctrine; specially he placed the idea of *Bodhisattva* in the foreground, presenting Buddhism as the way of *Bodhisattva*. It is said that Nāgārjuna did not mention the *Bodhisattva*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

practice and the aim of Buddhahood in his works, he only spoke of extinction (*Nirvāna*) and the Middle way.

Two known works of Āryadeva are *Catuhṣataka* and *Satasāstra*.⁶¹ The former deals with the way of *Bodhisattva*, it may be regarded as a supplement to *Mālamadhyamikakārikā* and the latter deals with the *Samkhya*, *Jaina*, *Lokāyata*, etc. He did not only criticize particular doctrines of the Early Buddhist schools, but also criticized the fundamental notions of the two great *Brahmical* philosophical schools, the *Samkhya* and *Vaisesika*. The former holds that an effect is identical with its cause and the latter that it is different from its cause. Apart from that, he attacked *Jaina*, *Lokāyata* and two theistic schools, the *Vaisnavas* and *Saivas*.⁶²

Asvaghosa, who flourished at the time of king Kaniska about 100 A.D., was a *Brahmin* converted to Buddhism. His famous works are the *Mahāyāna Sraddhotpāla sāstra* and *Buddhacarita*.⁶³ The *Mahāyāna Sraddhotpāla sāstra* was compiled in *Sanskrit* about the first century A.D. It was translated into Chinese by Paramārtha in 554 A.D. and by Siksānanda in 700 A.D. Suzuki translated into English under the title 'The Awakening Faith of *Mahāyāna*'. His doctrine is *Tathatā* or suchness, the ultimate reality. It is an unconditioned noumenon, the fundamental essence of the whole universe and living beings. Without it one can not attain Buddhahood. It is said that Asvaghosa belonged to Early *Mahāyāna*. He did not belong to *Madhyamika* or *Yogācāra* school.

Maitreyanātha was the founder of the *Yogācāra* school.⁶⁴ According to L.M. Joshi, it probably flourished in the third century A.D., but as per J. Sinhā, it flourished in the fourth century A.D. *Yogācāra* school reached its climax during the Gupta age. Asanga was his disciple; his works and the time of his death are not known. His school is called *Yogācāra* or *Vijñānavāda*. The former relates to the practice of *Yoga* and the latter to the idealistic outlook (consciousness only). Maitreyanātha is assimilated to *Bodhisattva* Maitreya in Tusita heaven, who will

⁶¹ HIB, pp. 244-5.

⁶² AIB, p. 368.

⁶³ SIP₂, p. 376.

⁶⁴ JBC, p. 7.

become a Buddha in this world after Sakyamuni Buddha. And Vasubandhu is assumed to learn the doctrine of *Vijñānavāda* from *Bodhisattva* Maitreya. It is a misunderstanding. Vasubandhu, in fact, learned the *Vijñāna* doctrine from his master, named Manonātha. He did not learn the doctrine from *Bodhisattva* Maitreya.⁶⁵

Asanga was born in 310 A.D. and died in 390 A.D. in *Purusapura*, Kaniska's capital in *Gandhara*.⁶⁶ He was a famous philosopher of *Yogācāra* school. According to Tibetan Buddhist tradition, Asanga was born in the time of king Buddhapaksa and lived under his successor Gambhīrapaksa, afterwards traveling from East to *Ayodhyā* and lived for 12 years at *Nālandā* and died at *Rajagṛha*.⁶⁷ He wrote *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha*, *Dharmadharmatāvibhaṅga*, *Madhyālavibhaṅga*, *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, *Mahāyāna sūtra-lankāra*, *Yogācārabhūmisāstra*. Apart from these works, he wrote a minor work in verse to summarize the contents of *Vajracchedika sūtra*, named *Vajracchedikāvyākhyā*. Some scholars state that some of these works were really written by *Maitreyanātha*, Asanga's master.⁶⁸

According to Asanga, only *Mahāyāna sūtras* contain the deepest teachings of the Buddha, the conduct of Buddhahood. His main doctrine is consciousness only. In the *Abhidharmasammuccaya*, he gives a list of principles total one hundred items, of which the *ālaya* or home-consciousness is a container of all seeds of purity as well as impurity, and impregnated with traces of *manas*, and the other consciousness are functions of *ālaya*. The way of *Bodhisattva* is also mentioned in the *Mahāyāna sūtra-lankāra* including the thought of enlightenment. Asanga maintains that the ultimate reality is neither existing nor not existing.⁶⁹

Vasubandhu is said to have lived about the last quarter of the fourth century A.D.⁷⁰ But S. Radhakrishnan⁷¹ assigns him to the later part of the fifth century A.D.;

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ HIB, p. 264.

⁶⁷ AIB, p. 414.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

⁷⁰ HIB, p. 268.

⁷¹ RIP₁, p. 624.

J. Sinhā⁷² asserts that Vasubandhu lived in the first half of the fifth century A.D. and L.M. Joshi⁷³ thinks that Vasubandhu lived in 300 A.D.

A.K. Warder⁷⁴ holds that Vasubandhu, Asanga's younger brother, the author of *Abhidharmakosa*, certainly lived not later than about the middle of the fourth century A.D. In fact, Vasubandhu was born in 320 A.D. and died in 400 A.D. in *Purusapura* (Kaniska's capital) in *Gandhara*. He is distinguished for his profound learning and preservation of thought. In the later part of his life, he was converted to *Mahāyāna* by his old brother Asanga. His works are *Viṃśatikā*, *Triṃśikā*, *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*, *Ta-Cheng pai fa ming men lun*, *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa*, *Fo hsing lun*, *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*, *Pratityasamut Pādayākyā*, etc.⁷⁵ Beside these *sāstras*, he wrote some commentaries on the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, the *Sukhavativyūha sūtra*, the *Dasabhūmika sūtra*, etc.⁷⁶ Vasubandhu is said to have written four logical works: *Vādaividhi*, *Vādaividhāna*, *Vādakausala*, and *Tarkasāstra*.⁷⁷ Vasubandhu was patronized by king Samudragupta (320-380 A.D.).⁷⁸

According to A.K. Warder⁷⁹, there were two Vasubandhus during the time of Gupta. The former was Vasubandhu I, Asanga's younger brother, the author of *Abhidharmakosa* and the latter Vasubandhu II, *Dinnāga*'s master.

Vasubandhu II (455-530 A.D.), who lived in *Ayodhyā*, was patronized by king Skandagupta (456-467).⁸⁰ Vasubandhu II's works are not known, perhaps his works are identified with that of Vasubandhu I.

Dinnāga or Dignāga was Vasubandhu II's pupil.⁸¹ According to Taranātha⁸², Dinnāga was born in the *Pallava* country at a place called *Simhavaktra* near *Kāñci*.

⁷² SIP₂, p. 376.

⁷³ JBC, p. 7.

⁷⁴ AIB, p. 424.

⁷⁵ HIB, pp. 269-71.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ DAI, p. 97.

⁷⁹ AIB, p. 424.

⁸⁰ NMB, p. 39.

⁸¹ AIB, p. 425.

⁸² *Ibid.*

After becoming a Buddhist monk, he joined a community of *Vatsīputrīya* school but he did not agree with the doctrine of the school. Accordingly he left them and met Vasubandhu II and studied with him in *Ayodhyā*. He lived about the end of the fifth century A.D. He was a father of Indian logic.⁸³ He inaugurated a new school of Critical philosophy and the Buddhist doctrines were reoriented after him. His chief works are *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, *ālambanaparīkṣā*, *Trikālaparīkṣā*, and *Nyāyamukha*.⁸⁴ He lived mostly in *Kalinga* (modern *Orissa*) and afterwards he visited university of *Nālandā*, there he established his new doctrine of the Theory of knowledge, leaving behind a tradition of teachers to perpetuate it.

Eventually, he returned back to *Kalinga* where he is said to have written his final work, *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. He died in *Kalinga* during the sixth century A.D.⁸⁵

2. Thought of Mahāyāna Buddhism

In the field of relative truth (*Samvrtisatya*), *Mahāyānists* seemingly recognize the *Hīnayāna* doctrine of phenomenal aspect. They agree that the universe has been created by four material elements, viz. earth, water, fire, and wind. These elements are impermanent, changing and selfless. Man is very complex. Besides his physical body, he has a mental factor including feeling, perception, mental function and consciousness. These mental elements are also transitory, painful, and sorrowful.

In the Heart *sūtra*⁸⁶, when *Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara* has the profound practice of *prajñāparamitā sūtra*, he investigates and perceives that five aggregates (*skandhas*) are always changing, thus securing his deliverance from all distresses and sufferings. According to the *sūtra*, the so-called body is subjected to birth, oldage, sickness and death. Mind is also disturbed by sorrow, grief, suffering, and lamentation. In short, one's body and mind are always changing and perishing. By non-attaching to the aggregative body and mind, one is freed from sufferings.

⁸³ JBC, p. 8.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ AIB, pp. 425-40.

⁸⁶ SBS, p. 134.

The *Vajracchedika* or Diamond cutter *sūtra* maintains that all conditioned things are impermanent and selfless (*māyā*). From the big things like sky, clouds, rivers, and mountains to the small ones as the ants, mosquitoes, and other insects are subjected to the law of causality. That is to say, they are in the state of becoming, arising, changing and passing away. Even one's house, fame, wealth, beauty are transitory and non-eternal like a dream or an illusion. The *sūtra* has a stanza as follows:

“All conditioned things are like a dream,
Like an illusion, a bubble and a shadow,
Like dew and lightning,
Thus should you meditate upon them.”⁸⁷

The *Vimalakirtinirdeśa sūtra* also asserts that this body is inert like the earth, selfless like water, lifeless like fire, impersonal like wind and non-substantial like space.⁸⁸

This body as well as things in the universe are not permanent and there is nothing in the world that exists as self. Everything is no-self and non-eternal. It is desire (*tanhā*) that caused suffering since one always desires what is impermanent, changeable, and perishable. It is impermanence of the object of desire that causes disappointment and regret. All pleasures are also transient. And when knowledge is attained, suffering comes to an end.

In *Mahāvagga* (the sutta of *Theravāda*), the Buddha gives his disciples a discourse on fire to indicate the ceaseless flux of becoming called the world.

“Worlds on worlds are rolling ever,
From creation to decay,
Like the bubbles on a sea,
Sparkling, bursting, borne away.”⁸⁹

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁸⁸ RHV, p. 22.

⁸⁹ RIP₁, p. 368.

A similar instance of fire is given in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra*. There a rotten and burning house is used to symbolize the impermanence and danger of the triple world including one's elemental body. The *sūtra* describes in detail a rotten and burning house in which the buildings were in decay, the fences and walls corrupt, the bases of the pillars rotten, the beams and ridge poles tilting and slanted. All of a sudden fire broke out at the same time from all sides of the house and the house began to burn. At that time, the father was outside but his children were absorbed in play, did not know what has happened, the father realizes that his children are in imminent danger of destruction and calls them to come out but they ignore his appeals and go on playing. They are not frightened or afraid of, they do not wish to come out. They do not know what is the fire, what is the house, and what will be lost, etc.⁹⁰

In this paragraph, the ruing and burning house symbolized the triple world that is impermanent and always to be burnt by the fire of decay and destruction. The building was in decay, fences and walls corrupt, the base of the pillars rotten, the beams and ridge poles tilting and slanted stand for one's physical body and mind that are non-eternal. That is to say, the human body fundamentally is handsome, powerful, beautiful gradually becomes subject to old age, sickness, and death. His face becomes gaunt, skin wrinkled, hair white, ears deaf, eyes dull, joints painful, limbs tremble uncontrollably. Sometimes eating and drinking are not digestible. Breath-in and breath-out are not continual. Blood is gradually dry, sputum and saliva run out, etc. And the fire of desire, hatred, ignorance, sorrow, grief, suffering and lamentation always burn his mind.

The Buddha also had the elemental body but he knew how to get out of these sufferings. Whereas, all living beings are tied firmly to attachments of self and self-belongings therefore they can not escape from the worldly disturbances. Out of compassion, the Buddha uses the doctrine of three vehicles, i.e. *Sravakayāna*, *Pratyeka-buddhayāna* and *Bodhisattvayāna* to save them from the burning house. Having brought them to the safety, the Buddha gives them the great vehicle or *Buddhayāna*.

⁹⁰ SLFS, pp. 56-60.

All Buddhists, *Hīnayānist* and *Mahāyānist*, believe in the empirical world that is governed by the law of cause and effect. The *Vaibhāsikas* and *Sautrāntikas* maintain that the atoms, which are seemingly eternal, contain impermanent element. *Yogācāris* recognize the reality of external objects, which are created by material, that then are not eternal. And only *ālayavijñāna* or cosmic mind is eternal; all things, which are manifested from *ālayavijñāna*, are non-eternal as a dream, illusion, and hallucination and there are no objects to exist beyond *ālayavijñāna*.⁹¹

In the field of absolute truth (*paramārtha satya*), *Hīnayāna* appears to have not yet mentioned essence or noumenon of all things. *Mahāyānists* assume that though all conditioned things are impermanent and destroyable, their real nature exists forever. The real-nature or noumenon of all things is called by many names in *Mahāyāna* doctrines such as ‘thusness’ in the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*; ‘*sānyatā*’ in the *prajñāparamitā sūtra*; ‘self-nature of *Amitābha*’ in the *Sukhāvativyāha sūtra*; ‘Buddha-knowledge’ in the *Saddarmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*; ‘*Dharmakāya*’ in the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*; ‘Absolute *Nirvāna*’ in the *Mahāparinirvāna sūtra*, etc.

Although the names of the Absolute are many, its nature is only one. Nāgārjuna I, the soul of *Madhyamika* school, describes the Absolute by means of eightfold negations as follows:

“It is neither origination nor cessation,
Neither permanence nor impermanence,
Neither unity nor diversity,
Neither coming in nor going-out.”⁹²

The self-nature or Absolute is the foundation of all existences. It is free from dualism and imperfection. The pairs of opposite categories such as origination and cessation, permanence and impermanence, unity and diversity, coming-in and going-out belong to dualism and imperfection. Self-nature or *sānyatā* that is beyond these opposite categories. It is beyond empirical existence, non-existence and both. It is the same in all positive and negative beings; it is beyond *samsāra* and *nirvāna*. It is free

⁹¹ SIP₂, p. 394.

⁹² KBC, p. 84.

from sin; oldage; sickness; death; hunger, and thirst. It is the subject that persists throughout the changes of external objects. It is the subtle reality that nothing can destroy. Death does not touch it nor vice dissolves it. The *Mahāparinirvāna sūtra* says that the Absolute is free from craving, from evils, from fear and it embraces all.⁹³ Real permanence, real joy, real self, and real calm are its characteristics. It is a self-existent and self-complete entity and there is nothing outside it to exist; from which all things are sprung. It is the person that sees, not the objects seen.⁹⁴

The Heart *sūtra* asserts that *sānyatā* or self-nature of all things is not created, not annihilated, not pure, not impure, not increasing, and not decreasing. Therefore, in the *sānyatā* there is no form (*rāpa*), no reception (*vedanā*), no conception (*sañjñā*), no mental function (*sankāra*), and no consciousness (*viññāna*); there is no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. There is no Four Noble Truths, no wisdom, and also no attainment of *Nirvāna*.⁹⁵

As above, the Absolute is beyond the phenomenal concepts such as the creation and annihilation, purity and impurity even wisdom and *Nirvāna* are also not found in the absolute. The absolute nature of all things is non-nature and non-nature is their real-nature.⁹⁶

Buddha, *Bodhisattva*, *Nirvāna*, *saṃsāra*, soul and no-soul are only the imaginations of thought. The Absolute lies between two extremes of existence and non-existence, permanence and impermanence, soul and no-soul, *saṃsāra* and *nirvāna*. The Absolute or *sānyatā* is also called the absolute *Nirvāna* or true-mind which is inherence of all living beings from the time without beginning. It is neither lost nor acquired, neither positive nor negative; it is total extinction of all relations to positive and negative beings. If it is positive, it is a product which is subjected to decay and death. If it is absolute negation of suffering and birth, then it is non-eternal. So there is no difference between *saṃsāra* and *Nirvāna*. All phenomena completely cease in it, all knowledge of phenomena cease in it and becoming extinct in it.

⁹³ RIP₁, p. 152.

⁹⁴ RPU, p. 502.

⁹⁵ SBS, pp. 134-5.

⁹⁶ AIB, p. 351.

The basic teaching of *Avatamsaka sūtra* aims at the theory of *Dharmadhātu* that maintains that all principles in the universe arose simultaneously and all are *Sūnyatā* (emptiness). The emptiness has two aspects, viz. the static aspect as essence or noumenon, and the dynamic aspect as phenomenon. All phenomena embrace noumenon in them, one thing in all things and all things in one thing. In other words, noumenon is present in all things and all things are the manifestations of it. To explain this theory, in 704 C.E, Fa Tsang, who was a master of *Hua Yen* school in China, wrote an essay on the golden lion. In the essay, gold is the symbol of noumenon or self-nature or *sānyatā* while the lion is the symbol of phenomenon or individual self. *Sānyatā* or self-nature has no form of its own, it may assume any form that conditions assign to it. To illustrate the interpenetration and mutual identification of all things or phenomena, Fa Tsang wrote that the various organs of the lion take in the body of lion by means of gold, so that any one organ is identified with any other organ. Thus gold in each organ of lion is found in the whole lion. It is to say, there is one permanent entity in all impermanent things, it is one and it is known by intuitive wisdom.⁹⁷

Nāgārjuna uses the word '*sānyatā*' for both, relative truth and absolute truth. All things are relative but they are grounded in the Absolute. The relative is the way to the absolute that can not be obtained without the help of the relative.

The *Saddarmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, chapter second, asserts that the self-nature of all principles exists in ten suchness, that is, appearance as suchness, nature as suchness, substances as suchness, power, activity, primary cause, environmental cause, effect, reward and retribution as suchness and the equality of these nine factors as suchness.⁹⁸ These ten suchness represent the eternal existence of self-nature or *sānyatā*. It lies beyond any thinking and discussion. It is itself in any time and space though all principles always change.

The *Lankāvatāra sūtra*, the basic *sūtra* of *Yogācāra* school, asserts that there is nothing eternal in the universe, except the *tathāgatagarbha* or cosmic mind. Other existences such as matter, sound, smell, taste, touch, and idea are only the

⁹⁷ KBC, p. 317.

⁹⁸ SILS, p. 22.

manifestations of the cosmic mind. Man's mental factor includes eight consciousness, viz. *ālaya* or home-consciousness, *manas*, *manovijñāna* and five consciousnesses of sense organ. When five consciousness of sense organs (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and bodily consciousness) contact the external objects, *manas* associates with *manovijñāna* to make the roaring waves over *ālaya* ocean. In other words, the imagination of various consciousness originates through the traces (*vāśana*), that have accumulated in *ālaya* from the time without beginning. When these traces are to be stirred up by the combination of *manas* and *manovijñāna* (mental consciousness), *ālaya* or home-consciousness is now polluted. When *manas* is purified, the *manovijñāna* and five consciousnesses of sense organs are also pure. It is *ālaya* or home-consciousness are now the *tathāgatagarbha* or embryo of the Absolute that is also called *Dharmakāya*. In the pure nature of *ālayavijñāna* there is nothing to remove, to cultivate or to attain. And in the Absolute, there is no Buddhahood or *Nirvāna* that can be attained because it is always in the state of *nirvāna*. Understanding this idea, Vietnamese Ch'an master Thien Lao wrote a verse as follows:

“Green bamboos and yellow flowers are not other objects,
While clouds and bright moon reveal the complete suchness.”⁹⁹

As above, all things in the universe are fundamentally beautiful and pure but by impure mind and *karma*, one sees them as impure. In reality, green bamboos, yellow flowers, white cloud and bright moon are the manifestations of the Absolute or *Dharmakāya*.

One day, Hui neng, the sixth patriarch of Chinese Ch'an school was suddenly enlightened and he realized that there is nothing that exists outside the self-nature or *Dharmakāya*. Then he said to his master that:

“Who would have expected that the self-nature is fundamentally pure and clean?
Who would have expected that the self-nature is fundamentally beyond birth and death?
Who would have expected that the self-nature is fundamentally complete in itself?

⁹⁹ TTSVN, p. 60.

Who would have expected that the self-nature is fundamentally immutable?

Who would have expected that the self-nature is fundamentally created all things?"¹⁰⁰

In brief, by discovering self-nature or noumena of all things, *Mahāyāna* positively contributes its monism to the human civilization as well as Indian culture. The noumenal doctrine of *Mahāyāna* is the supplement to the *Hīnayāna* phenomenal doctrines since five *pāli Nikāyas* and four *Sanskrit āgamas* only mention the phenomenal aspects of all principles that are always impermanent, suffering, and selflessness. Even *Hīnayānic Nirvāna* also belongs to the relative truth because it comes from cultivation and ethical life. Whereas *Mahāyāna Nirvāna* is the self-nature or *sānyatā* of all living beings and it can not be attained by any effort of man. It is inherent; if a man recognizes it and to live upto it, his liberation will come naturally. Without *Mahāyāna* doctrine, Buddhism would have been a dead body and it would have been considered as foresight of science; its contribution to the civilization of humankind is not much because a perfect doctrine must include both relative and absolute or phenomenal and noumenal doctrines.

3. The Practice of Mahāyāna Buddhism

The main practice of *Mahāyānism* is that of ten perfections (*pāramitas*), i.e. Generosity (*dāna*), morality (*sīla*), patience (*ksānti*), energy (*virīya*), concentration (*dhyāna*), wisdom (*prajñā*), device (*upāya*), vow (*pnamidhāna*), power (*bāla*) and intuition (*jñāna*).

The word '*pāramitā*' has been translated as the transcendental virtue, perfect virtue, or highest perfection.¹⁰¹ Wanting to step on the road to the Buddhahood, a *Bodhisattva* should practise these ten perfections (*pāramitā*) simultaneously or gradually one by one.

(1) Perfection of Generosity or Dāna Pāramitā

The word '*Dāna*' literally means 'giving', 'generosity', 'charity', etc. A *Bodhisattva* cultivates charity; firstly he bestows gifts upon his parents and relatives,

¹⁰⁰ SBS, p. 358.

¹⁰¹ HBSL, p. 168.

then he helps the needy, the poor, the sick, the afflicted and the helpless. He sympathizes with one's sufferings and helps him enthusiastically. Santideva¹⁰² teaches that a monk should even share his scanty alms with the poor. A *Bodhisattva* gives all that he has such as his wealth, food, beverages, medicine, couches, seats, garden, horses, silver, gold, cloths, etc. but he should not give anything that may be used to inflict injury on other living beings. He should not refrain from supplying others with the means of gratifying their sensual appetites and passions. He should not give away poisons, weapons, intoxicating liquor and nets for the capture of animals. He should not give anybody the instrument for suicide or self-torture. Besides giving gifts to the needy, he constructs hospitals, schools and practising other welfare projects.

In *Fo Shuo Te Fu Tien jing*, translated by Fa li and Fa Hu in the western *Chin* dynasty in China, the Buddha teaches seven types of welfare activities that constitute the field of compassion. These seven types of activities are: (1) construction of towers (*stāpas*), monastic halls and pavilions; (2) establishment of fruit gardens, bathing houses, hospitals, schools and planting trees at the proper places; (3) dispensing medicine for the sick people; (4) construction of sturdy boats to ferry people; (5) construction of bridge; (6) digging of wells along well travelled roads; (7) construction of toilets for the convenience of the public.¹⁰³

In the *Hīnayāna* doctrine, the Buddha and monks are considered as the ideal fields of merit for a devotee offering gifts to and storing up merits for the future. In *Mahāyāna sūtras*, the situation is just reverse. Instead of the laity making offerings to monks and monasteries, now it is monks and monasteries offering gifts to people who are the fields of merit of compassion.

Beside giving wealth and material objects, a *Bodhisattva* uses the device to teach the Buddhist teachings to others in order to withdraw them from the worldly sufferings. He also teaches them professions, medicines, arts, literature, philosophy and others to the needy; helping them to live a happy life in the world.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 174.

¹⁰³ KTB, pp. 296-8.

When a *Bodhisattva* gives food to others, he wishes them to have a long life, beauty, happiness, wisdom and attaining the highest happiness, *Nirvāna*. When he gives drink to the thirsty beings, he wishes that the drink does not only quench one's material thirst but also reduce their thirst of passion. He renounces the world and family in order to open great love towards all. He renounces his wife and children to become a master of the world and renouncing his kingdom to inherit the kingdom of righteousness. Thus the altruistic attitude of a *Bodhisattva* is service without reward. The final purpose of a *Bodhisattva* is the attainment of the Buddhahood but he never forgets the practice of giving.

(2) Perfection of Morality or *Sīla* Pāramitā

Sīla is said to be the foundation of ethics. It is compared with a flawless gem, crystal or lapis lazuli. *Sīla* is still more precious than gold and silver. Without observation of *Sīla* (precept), a *Bodhisattva* can not advance in the spiritual cultivation and hardly attains freedom from bondages. Precept adorns a *Bodhisattva* like a beautiful silk garment and the fragrance of morality spreads far and wide.¹⁰⁴ The function of *Sīla* is the purification of six sense organs and leading him to the attainment of meditation and wisdom.

A *Bodhisattva*, who practises *Sīla*, examines himself and discovers his own faults and shortcoming. He does not care for worldly honour or gain of any kind.

Five precepts are commonly for monk and layman. These are: No killing any being, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no telling lie, no using intoxicant.

Abstention from killing beings corresponds to *ahiṃsā*. A *Bodhisattva* does not hate any living being, and can not use weapon of any kind to kill them even in thought, because he knows living beings have strong desire to live and fear death. He cultivates *karuṇā* and *metā*. *Ahiṃsā* (non-violence) is indeed the highest virtue. If anybody practises *ahiṃsā*, war never comes to the world and everyone will live in peace and

¹⁰⁴ HBSL, p. 194.

happiness. War has its germ in hatred, avarice, cruelty and selfishness and the glory of victorious man is stained with blood.¹⁰⁵

A *Bodhisattva* abstains from taking the life of any being. He also condemns and shuns the barbarous custom of war among the states and leaders of the countries in the world. A virtuous president or king tries his best to avoid war, as he knows that the so-called duty of the warrior caste is based on cruelty and unrighteousness. *Mahāyānists* also extended to the scope of this precept to the relations between human being and animals as an animal is also a living being who will become a Buddha in the future.

The idea of Buddha-nature to animals is found in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra* on which *Mahāyānists* teach that it is a sin to eat meat. They abrogate the *Hīnayāna* rule that allows monk to eat meat if meat is not especially cooked for him. The *Lankāvatāra sūtra* devotes a long chapter to this subject and several arguments are adduced in favour of vegetarianism.¹⁰⁶ It is possible that an animal may really be one's relative, who was reborn in the state of woe.

A *Bodhisattva* abstains from theft. It is to say that abstention from taking what is not given. He is contented with his possessions and does not covet those of other people. He respects the rights of property in things that belong to others. He does not steal even a leaf or a blade of grass as he knows if one loses possessions, one will be suffering.

A *Bodhisattva* abstains from sexual misconduct. A household *Bodhisattva* is contented with his wife and does not cast longing eyes on the wives of other men or entices them with his sweet sounds or seduces them with money and passion, as he knows that his seducing actions will destroy easily the family happiness of others. He does not harbour even a lustful thought with regard to other married women. It is true in case of female Household *Bodhisattva*, too. She only loves his husband without lustful intercourse with an other man, as she knows the happiness of the children comes from her happiness of wife and husband. If she is adulterous with an other man, the bad influence will come to her children and the happiness will never come to them.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

¹⁰⁶ SSLS, pp. 368-71.

Adultery is like a poison that mars and destroys human life. A Homeless *Bodhisattva* should live with a pure life without wife. He never thinks about sex-intercourse with any lady. His own goal is the liberation from *karma* and rebirth, so a virtuous life is necessary to him. The *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra*¹⁰⁷ teaches that a Homeless *Bodhisattva* should take care of himself from woman. He should not expound the law to a woman with a desire for her. He should not wish to look at her body. When he enters into the house of others, he should not talk with a little girl or an unmarried woman or a widow. If he tries to look at her body or talks to her, he may fall in love with her; his virtuous life will be cut off and the Buddhahood never comes to him.

A *Bodhisattva* abstains from telling lie; he speaks the truth and nothing but the truth, and he does so at the proper time. His actions are in harmony with his words. What he hears here, he does not repeat elsewhere to raise a quarrel against the people here. What he hears elsewhere, he does not repeat here to raise a quarrel against the people there. He lives as a binder of those who are divided, encourages those who are friends, a lover of peace. He only speaks the words that make for peace. He does not tell a lie even in joking; he does not tell a lie even in a dream or in the attainment of spiritual states. Truthfulness is the highest spiritual evolution, it is great and prevails against all the powers of evil.

Sometimes he must tell a lie for liberation of others from danger and death or for some other good purpose. In this case, his telling lie is not sinful, as it is a means used for compassion. In the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra*, an illustration is given. Once upon a time an old man lived in a house with his children, one day fire broke out. The children were engrossed in playing and did not notice the fire. The father, who was outside realizing that his children were in imminent danger of destruction, called them to come out. Since they ignored his appeal and kept on playing, he resolved to have recourse to a stratagem.

Knowing that his children were inordinately fond of play-things of various kinds, he again called them to come out of the house but this time he promised to give them goat-carts, deer-carts and bullock-carts. On hearing these words, they all came

¹⁰⁷ SLFS, p. 191.

rushing and tumbling out of the burning house. Having brought them to safety, the father bestowed upon them, in response to their demands, not the three different kinds of carts actually promised, but bullock carts only.

In promising one thing and giving another thing, the father was not guilty for falsehood, for he had from the beginning determined to save his children by means of an expedient.¹⁰⁸

A *Bodhisattva* abstains from intoxicants that consist of opium, drug, heroin, alcohol that lead man to intoxication and addiction. Such an intoxicated man can not master himself in his actions, speech and thinking. His heritage, property, career, and family happiness will certainly be crumbled by his pleasures. Sometimes he can be a case of lost human dignity by his intoxication and he can act like an animal. He can also kill people, robbing other's belongings, raping women and telling lie for his dark purpose. All evil actions do not come from outside but from his ignorance.

In present time, many people are punished with death penalty or life-sentence for doing business of heroin or drug. Alcohol and drug are more dangerous than poisons. These poisonous things not only kill one's body but they also kill his soul. Tobacco is also a dangerous thing that harms one's health. Cancer, pulmonary, and other sickness come from smoking. The Buddha's disciple not only abstains from these poisonous things but he also teaches others the harmful effect of pursuing intoxication and addiction and withdrawing the need of these dangers.

(3) Perfection of Patience or Ksānti Pāramitā

Patience or *ksānti* is always described as the opposite of anger, hatred, malice, repugnance. It is defined as freedom from anger and excitement and as the habit of enduring and pardoning injuries and insults.¹⁰⁹

A *Bodhisattva*, who cultivates the perfection of patience, forgives others for all kinds of injury, insult, abuse and censure even if his body is destroyed and cut off into a hundred pieces with swords and spears, he does not allow an anger thought against

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-9.

¹⁰⁹ HBSL, p. 209.

his cruel persecutors. He forgives all without exception, his friend and his enemies and those who are neither. Being reviled, he reviles not again, being beaten he beats not again, being annoyed he annoys not again. He also exhibits the virtue of patience by enduring hunger and thirst, cold and heat and also all the severity and inclemency of wind and weather. He lives happy even in places infested with fleas, gnats, serpents and other such obnoxious and dangerous insects and reptiles. He experiences pleasures even when he is subjected to the most excruciating pain, torture, and mutilation, because he sends out loved thoughts and wishes to all living beings. He works hard day and night to purify his mind from all evils and he does not yield to indolence and lassitude. The *Bodhisattva Sadāparibhāta* (Never Despising *Bodhisattva*), in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra*, symbolizes the practice of patience.¹¹⁰

In the time of Buddha Bhiṣmagarjitasvararājan, *Bodhisattva Sadāparibhāta* often did not read or recite *sūtras*. He only bowed to monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. When he saw them in distance, he went to them on purpose, bowed to them and praised them, saying: “I do not despise you because you will be able to become Buddhas”. When he had said this, the people struck him with a stick or a piece of wood or a piece of tile or stone. He ran away to a distance, and said in a loud voice from afar, “I do not despise you, you will be able to become Buddhas”. Because he always said this, he was called Never Despising *Bodhisattva* by the arrogant monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen.

Being beaten, he beats not again, being abused he abuses not again; he tries to declare the truth, “everybody will be able to become Buddha”.

(4) Perfection of Energy or Virya Pāramitā

Virya means energy in the pursuit of the good, vigour in well doing or effort for the good. Enlightenment depends entirely on energy. Where there is energy, there is enlightenment.

There are two kinds of energy, that is, the energy of preparation and initiative and the energy of practice and activity.

¹¹⁰ SLFS, p. 260.

In the moral development, a *Bodhisattva* resolutely combats all the great and small sins and vices that may drag him down. He employs a suitable antidote to every dangerous fault and weakness; he dispels hatred by the cultivation of love, counteracts sensuality by the meditation on impurity. He does not yield to despair, as he knows that all living beings can become Buddhas.

In learning, a *Bodhisattva* not only knows Buddhist doctrine well but he also tries to learn sciences, arts, medicines, psychology, philosophy, logic, etc. Thus he gets good liberal education. The accomplishments help a *Bodhisattva* in his work of converting people to Buddhism, healing the sick, and conferring material benefits on all.

In altruistic activity, a *Bodhisattva* reflects carefully before he embarks on an enterprise but he carries all his works to a successful issue. He does not leave it half-done and he is not daunted and discouraged by difficulties and dangers. He does not lose hope on account of the stupidity and wickedness of the people.

A *Bodhisattva* finds happiness in his works. He works with an impartial spirit that will cause him happiness. For him, work is happiness and happiness is work.¹¹¹ Generally he works for happiness of others.

(5) Perfection of Concentration or Dhyāna Pāramitā

Dhyāna is translated as meditation, trance, ecstasy, contemplation, etc. Meditation is one-pointedness of mind, it is concentration of the mind on one subject to the entire exclusion of all else.

In the basic doctrine of *Mahāyāna*, a *Bodhisattva*, who begins to practise *dhyāna*, must give up family life and ordinary social intercourse, and retire to a secluded spot in the forest. He must live as a celibate hermit and recluse. He thinks that life in the home is narrow and full of hindrances while a monk's life is like the open air; it is difficult to lead the pure and holy spiritual life as a house-holder.

When the subject has been chosen, he sits cross-legged with the body erect, the right foot is placed on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh; the right hand

¹¹¹ HBSL, p. 220.

is placed on the left hand, the neck straightened and the nose is in a perpendicular line with the naval. The tongue should rest on the upper palate. The belt should be loosened and clothes neatly adjusted and the eyes be closed. He begins to gain one-pointedness of the mind and to control any unwholesome thought at its very inception. By this doing, his bad and harmful thoughts are gradually destroyed, and the good virtues such as love, kindness, compassion, joyfulness, and equanimity appear.¹¹² By the uninterrupted practice of meditation, he can attain four states of meditation.¹¹³

In the first state, a *Bodhisattva* after freedom from sensual pleasures and evil demeritorious states of mind, attains and abides in the first *dhyāna* which arises from seclusion and which is associated with the pleasure of joy and accompanied by reflection and investigation. When he attained this state of *dhyāna*, if he dies in this world, he can be reborn in three realms of the first *dhyāna* of *Rūpaloka*. These are: (1) the realm of *Brahmā*'s retinue (*Brahmā pārisajja*), (2) the realm of *Brahmā*'s ministers, and (3) the realm of the great *Brahmās*.

In the second state, with the cessation of reflection and investigation, he, serene at heart, concentrates his mind on one point, attains and abides in the second *dhyāna* which is associated with the pleasure of joy, and arises from rapt concentration in the absence of reflection and investigation. When he completes the second *dhyāna*, if he dies here, he can be reborn in three realms of the second *dhyāna* of *Rūpaloka*. These are (1) the realm of the Minor Luster (*parittābha*), (2) the realm of Infinite Luster (*Appamāṇabha*), (3) the realm of the Radiant *Brahmas* (*ābhassarā*).

In the third state, having renounced the attachment to joy, he remains equable, mindful and self-possessed, experiences in his body the pleasure that the Noble Ones describe as "living in equanimity, mindfulness and happiness". He attains and abides in the third *dhyāna* which is devoid of joy. After completing the state of *dhyāna*, and dies here, he can be reborn in the three realms of the third *dhyāna* of *Rūpaloka*. These are (1) the realms of the *Brahmās* of Minor Aura (*paritta subha*), (2) the realm of the

¹¹² NBT, p. 308.

¹¹³ HBSL, p. 230.

Brahmās of Infinite Aura (*Appamānasubha*), (3) the realm of the *Brahmās* of Steady Aura (*subhakinha*).

In the fourth state, on account of the abandonment of pain and pleasure and the previous disappearance of elation and dejection, he attains and abides in the fourth *dhyāna*, which is neither painful nor pleasant, and which is absolutely pure through equanimity and mindfulness. After completing this state of *dhyāna*, if he dies here, he can be reborn in the three realms of fourth *dhyāna*. These are (1) the realm of the *Brahmās* of Great Reward (*Vehapphala*), (2) the realm of Mindless Beings (*Asaññasatta*), and (3) the pure abodes which are further subdivided into five, viz (1) the durable realm (*Aviha*), (2) the serene realm (*Atappa*), (3) the beautiful realm (*Sudassa*), (4) the clear sighted realm (*Sudassi*), and (5) the highest realm (*Akanittha*).

After attaining four states of *dhyāna*, he continues to cultivate and develop wisdom, then he attains six kinds of supernatural powers, three kinds of wisdom¹¹⁴, four stages of *Hīnayāna* saints¹¹⁵, and abides in the previous stages of *Bodhisattva*. It is to say that he attains *Sotapana*, *Sakadāgāmi*, *Anagāmi* and *Arhatship* that corresponds with the immovable stage of *Bodhisattva*.¹¹⁶ He then continues to cultivate four highest stages of *Mahāyāna*, viz. *Sādhumāti*, *Dharmamegha*, *Nirupamā*, and *Jñānavati*.¹¹⁷

But in the highest *sūtras* of *Mahāyāna* such as *Vimalakīrtinīdesa sūtra*, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, *Prajñā paramitā sūtra*, etc, one, who practises meditation, need not retire to the forest or any place of solitude. He can practise meditation in his work at a market, in a shop, in family or in a company, etc. In walking, standing, lying and sitting, he can practise meditation. It should be understood that solitude is within one's mind. If his mind is not settled, even a quiet forest would not be a congenial place. But if his mind is settled, even the central place of a busy town may be congenial.

(6) Perfection of Wisdom or Prajñāparamitā

Prajñā is translated wisdom or insight or intuition or spiritual enlightenment. The opposite of *prajñā* (wisdom) is often given as *avidyā* (ignorance). There are three

¹¹⁴ MN₁, pp. 92-3, DN₁, p. 276.

¹¹⁵ AN₁, pp. 229-35.

¹¹⁶ HBSL, p. 290.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 290-1.

kinds of wisdom in *Hīnayāna* teachings: Heard wisdom, intellectual wisdom, and experimental wisdom.¹¹⁸

Heard wisdom (*sutta mayā paññā*) is that which depends on hearing the teaching from another people or reading books. This is not his wisdom but he decides to adopt as his own.

Intellectual wisdom (*citta mayā paññā*) is that which arises after reading books or listening to sermons he considers or examines it whether it is really rational, beneficial he accepts it as true. But it is also not his own insight. It is only an intellectualization of the wisdom he has heard.

Experimental wisdom (*bhāvanā mayā paññā*) is that which arises out of his own experiences, out of self-realization of truth. This is the wisdom that he lives or real wisdom that brings about a change in his life.

According to *Mahāyānists*, three kinds of wisdom mentioned above belong to relative wisdom, which leads to the attainment of *Arhatship* or the immovable stage of *Bodhisattva* (the eighth stage of *Mahāyāna Bodhisattva*), stops the rebirth in this world. Buddhahood can not be attained by these kinds of wisdom.

In the highest *sūtras* of *Mahāyāna*, four kinds of wisdom are mentioned. These are the perfecting wisdom, the profound observing wisdom, the wisdom of equality and the great mirror wisdom.¹¹⁹

When the desire is rooted out of one's mind, his five consciousnesses of sense organs (hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, touching consciousnesses) are transmitted into the perfecting wisdom, his sixth consciousness (*manovijñāna* or mental consciousness) into the profound observing wisdom, his seventh consciousness (*manas*) into the wisdom of equality and his eighth consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*) into the great mirror wisdom. When one's mind is covered by the veil of ignorance, it gives rise to wrong thinking by which he gets sufferings. But once the veil of ignorance is removed, happiness (*nirvāna*) is obtained immediately.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

¹¹⁹ LCZ₃, p. 65.

(7) Perfection of Skillfulness or Upāya pāramitā

Upāya may be explained as expedient or skilful means, or wisdom in the choice and adoption of the means for converting others or helping them. It is specially related to a *Bodhisattva*'s work as a preacher of *Dharma* or a teacher of all subjects of study. A *Bodhisattva* always adopts his teaching to the capacity of the audience. He is like a physician, who prescribes different remedies for different diseases and different persons. The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* emphasizes the perfection of *Upāya* and gives many stories relating to it. The *sūtra* says that Gautama Buddha really attained enlightenment many aeons ago and lives forever. Out of compassion, he pretends to be born as a man and attained *Bodhi* under the tree. He did so in order to help humankind to liberate from sufferings. This is his *upāya kausalya*.¹²⁰ The *Bodhisattva* Avalokitesvara assumes thirty-two different forms in order to preach to different congregations. This is his *upāya*.¹²¹

Three remaining perfections, viz. perfection of vow, that of power and that of intuition are already discussed in the nine perfections above.

Apart from these, there are two other methods of practice of *Mahāyāna* that were popular in India, central Asia, China, and in the countries of south-east Asia as well. These are the recitation of Amitābha Buddha's name and the utterances of *Dharanis*. Both these are considered as the methods of meditation.

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¹²⁰ SLFS, pp. 219-21.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 289-90.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM

(1) Social Background

Generally, caste system was popular in Indian society before the period of Mauryas and discrimination between four castes became serious and fierce.

While analyzing the Indian social factor, it needs to be kept in mind that the history of ancient India have been the history of the upper castes. Almost none of Indian literary sources represent the view point of the various submerged sections of the society. By the beginning of the *Buddhism*, caste system with its gross inequalities was well entrenched in India and it had become both functional and hereditary. Four castes are known as *Brahmins*, *Ksatriyas*, *Vaisyas* and *Sūdras*. Among these castes, *Brahmins* were considered as the highest people, who enjoyed every social privilege and their ascendancy as an inalienable birthright. And they came to be viewed as gods in human form and kings were obligated to place themselves at their service.

In the *Madhura Sutta*, the *Brahmins* consider themselves as the most distinguished and three other castes as inferior. The *Brahmins* alone are accounted pure and those who are not *Brahmins* impure. The *Brahmins* are sons of *Brahman*, born from his mouth and the heirs of *Brahman*.¹

Such a haughty attitude of *Brahmins* was certainly protested by *Buddhism* and *Jainism* as all men have the power to become perfect. As a result, all members of the society were admitted into *Buddhist sangha* and then they were treated equally in the *Buddhist Order*.²

Again, the claim to superiority by the *Brahmins* against the rest of the castes was challenged by the *Ksatriyas*, who took lead in the struggle against the *Brahmins'* attitude as their powers as the ruler of the state increased. *Ksatriyas* were responsible to rule and maintain social order as well as to defend the country. This caste consisted

¹ NBT, p. 171.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 171-4.

of kings, mandarins, officers and soldiers. In the time of Buddha, *Ksatriyas* were placed higher than *Brahmins*.³ *Vaisyas*, the third class, traded and held an important part of social properties. This caste included landlords, businessmen, and small traders, etc. *Sūdras* included workers, hunters, menials and serfs, etc. This was the lowest class in the society and they were the property of three higher castes. It means that they were subservient to other castes. Generally, they lived and died like animals.

According to D.N. Jha⁴, the first three castes, *Brahmin*, *Ksatriya* and *Vaisya*, were twice-born and they were more privileged than *Sūdras* and untouchables who were outcaste. Generally speaking, ancient Indian rulers used the ideology of *Brahmanism* to consolidate their authority to run the social order. Asoka, the great king of Mauryas, embraced *Brahmanism* before converting to *Buddhism*. Though he followed *Buddhism*, castes system still existed in his empire. The caste division was, however, not severe in his kingdom. D.N. Jha⁵ holds that during the reign of Mauryas, four castes became endogamous and their rigidity, which generated tension, would not be found.

In the time of Asoka, a section of *Sūdras* for the first time in India history were aided by the state in setting down as farmers in the agricultural settlements and were granted lands and the fiscal exemption as well as the supply of cattle, seeds, and money in the hope of future payment.⁶ On the other hand, in industrial activities, artisans and craftsmen played their role in the production of commodities.⁷ On the basis of *Milindapanhō*, D.N. Jha⁸ holds that in the time of Mauryas there were seventy five occupations, out of which nearly sixty occupations were connected with various kinds of crafts. And the rest were connected with mining of products such as gold, silver, lead, tin, copper, iron and precious stones or jewels. The artisans and craftsmen were largely drawn, in this period, from *Sūdras*, who gained in wealth and status on account of the progress of crafts and commerces.

³ DAI, p. 64.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

In the time of Kusānas – Sātvāhanas, the caste division was seemingly blurred and *Brahmins* could not achieve considerable ascendancy. And many new sub-castes emerged on the basis of occupations. N. Dutt⁹ holds that in the Indian society appeared several occupational groups such as shepherds (*golikas*), ploughmen (*halikas*), weavers (*kolikas*), goldsmiths (*swonnakaras*), garland-makers (*malakaras*), and others. These occupational groups led to enhanced division of labour and increased specialisation and consequently to the achievement of greater technical skill in certain spheres of productions.

D.N. Jha¹⁰ asserts that, during the time of Kusānas – Sātavāhanas, the economic distinctions between the *Vaisyas* and *Sūdras* were difficult to discriminate. Another special feature of the period was that women enjoyed all social interests. Intelligent and educated women like Naganika and Gotami Balasri played an important role in running of the administration and they held property in their own rights. Women offered worship along with men, taking part in solemnity of ceremonies.¹¹ In short, during the time of Mauryas – Kusānas – Sātavāhanas, caste division was no longer too harsh and the inter-caste economic inequality was not abundant. Whereas, in the time of Guptas, caste division became fierce. Perhaps the derogatory like terms *Chandala* and untouchables were used during the Guptas period.

As pointed out above, *Brahmins* were placed under *Ksatriyas* in the time of Buddha but they regained a superior position in the time of Guptas, as can be judged from several concessions and priorities recommended for them. Although section of *Sūdras* was also granted lands in the newly colonized areas, they were also engaged as sharecroppers on crown lands; yet forced labour was imposed on them on a much larger scale than in the earlier periods. Truly, the land grants in the periods only paved the way for feudal development in India. Several inscriptions refer to the emergence of serfdom, which means that the peasants remain attached to their lands even when ownership is transferred. Perhaps serfdom began in south India as a *Pallava*

⁹ NMB, p. 31.

¹⁰ DAI, p. 85.

¹¹ NMB, p. 31.

inscription informs that sharecroppers remained attached to the plot that was given to *Brahmins*.¹²

On the other hand, in the countryside of northern India, there emerged a class of village elders and headmen, who had to be informed of land transfers. Later, they also ossified into a caste but the social implications of land grants and subinfeudation became pronounced in the post Gupta period when the feudalism was well established.¹³

In the industrial and commercial activities, artisans, craftsmen and businessmen were exploited excessively. Kautilya fixed the wages of artisans who were probably mostly *Sūdras*. They seem to have been the worst paid members of society. Again, the members of *Chandala* and untouchable were required to live beyond the pale of *Aryan* society. It means that they must live outside the main settlement; they must live near the garbage grounds or near the cremation grounds.¹⁴ And *Sūdras* continued to be employed as hired labourers or slaves during the period.

According to D.N. Jha¹⁵, there were fifteen kinds of slaves in the time of Guptas. They were mostly domestic servants employed in such impure works like sweeping the gateway, the privy, the road, removing the left-over food, ordure and rubbing the master's limbs, etc. Those, who engaged in agricultural activities, are described as doing pure works and are not included in the category of slaves.

On the other hand, the status of women was scorned and they were not entitled even to formal education. Patanjali¹⁶ tells that the maid servant and *Sūdra* women were meant for satisfying the pleasures of the people of the upper classes. At that time, women were denied any rights to keep property except garments and the some forms of Jewellery. They themselves were considered as property that could be given or loaned to any person of upper class.¹⁷ The practice of self immolation at the funeral

¹² DAI, pp. 100-1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

pyre of her master or that of her husband was approved by *Manu* law; and celibacy was to be strictly observed by widows.¹⁸

Moreover, many harsh punishments were influenced on the people of lower classes during the period. According to D.N. Jha¹⁹, if a man of low caste hurt a member of high classes, his limbs were to be cut off. If a *Sūdra* insulted a twice-born with gross invective, he would have his tongue cut out.

By these reasons, most *Sūdras* seethed in discontent about the law of *Manu* but they could not rise against it. They were destined to accept an unhappy life in a long night of medieval civilization of India.

(2) Political Background

Politics is very important factor for the religious development. A good regime of politics promotes growth of religion whereas a harsh regime will hold back its development and propagation. Generally, *Buddhism*, during the period, was not influenced by the change of politics.²⁰ *Mahāyāna Buddhism* was born and grown in the favourable political conditions. All rulers of dynasties supported both *Brahmanism* and *Buddhism*. Under their patronages, *Mahāyāna Buddhism* experienced a quantitative and qualitative progress during the periods of Kusānas, Sātavāhanas and Guptas. Many missionaries of *Mahāyāna* and *Sārvastivāda Buddhism* were sent to Central Asia and South eastern Asia during these periods.

Mauryas and Division of *Buddhist* sects

According to N. Dutt²¹, after the invasion and retreat of Alexander, the whole of India was united under the king Candragupta, founder of the Maurya dynasty. This dynasty lasted from 317 B.C. to 180 B.C. with five great reigns. Candragupta ruled from 317 B.C. to 293 B.C., Bindusāra from 293 B.C. to 268 B.C., Asoka from 268 B.C. to 232 B.C. and Brhadratha from 232 B.C. to 180 B.C.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²⁰ JBC, p. 33.

²¹ NMB, p. 1.

D.N. Jha²² adds that Candragupta was for sometimes in the camp of Alexander, after retreat of the Macedonian conqueror, he ascended the throne of *Magadha*. He united *Punjab* and the north western provinces with *Bihar*, and conquered many districts that had been subdued by the Greeks. For first time in the history of India, he brought the whole of northern India from the *Indus* to *Bihar* under his vigorous rule. Candragupta died about 293 B.C. and was succeeded by his son Bindusāra, who ruled for about 30 years. Bindusāra's son, Asoka, ascended the throne about 268 B.C. Among the rulers of Maurya dynasty, Asoka is considered as the strongest king of Mauryas.

Asoka, inheriting the magnificent empire founded by Candragupta, his grandfather, opened his empire to *Bengal* and *Orissa* and the whole northern India. *Bactria*, *Kabul* and *Kandahar* and the *Dekhan* as far as the *Krishna* river belonged to his kingdom. He embraced *Brahmanism* before converting to *Buddhism*. It is said that, after *Kalinga* war, he thought that he had killed innumerable people, so he came to *Buddhism* as his repentance. Under the reign of Asoka, *Buddhism* was considered as the state religion of India.²³ After becoming a *Buddhist*, he built many monasteries, temples for *Buddhist* monks and erected images of Buddha at many places in his kingdom. According to *Buddhist* tradition, he constructed 84,000 *stūpas* but the best specimens of contemporary art are the monolithic highly polished columns, standing free in space often crowned with animal figures.²⁴ He issued fourteen edicts in which the *Mahāyānic* teachings such as *ahimsā*, *maitrī*, *karunā*, toleration, wisdom, etc were mentioned.

Recently some of these edicts which have been discovered at *Indus*, *Jumna*, *Gujarat* and *Orissa*²⁵ show his actions. Besides the rock edicts, there were edicts, that were inscribed on pillars and that were executed towards the end of his reign. Among these stone pillars, two pillars have been discovered in *Delhi*, one in *Allahabad*, two in north *Bihar*, and one in central India.²⁶

²² DAI, pp. 99-100.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁴ RAI, p. 102.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

²⁶ DAI, p. 67.

D.N. Jha²⁷ has highly rated Asoka's *Dharma* because it emphasizes on abstinence from killing, considerate relationship between parents and children, elder and young people, friends, masters and servants and harmonization of various religious sects. According to him, Asoka's *dharma* excessively concerns with the general welfare of the subjects and it was also an ethical code that aimed at building up an attitude of social responsibility among the people.

Specially, under Asoka's patronage, the third *Buddhist* council was held.²⁸ K.D. Bajpai²⁹ holds that during the reign of Asoka, *Pataliputra*, the capital of *Magadha* had become the great cultural centre, where scholars of different *Buddhist* sects lived and preached their respective doctrines. According to him, *Sārvastivāda* school held an honoured position in *Magadha*; specially, *Kātyāyaniputra*, who was one of components of the *Sārvastivāda*, wrote *Jñāna prasthāna sūtra* in which he expounded the theory: All external objects exist in past, present and future. This theory was refuted by Moggaliputra Tissa, author of the *Kathāvatthu* that was compiled in the time of Asoka. By these reasons, the third *Buddhist* council was held under the chairmanship of Moggaliputra Tissa.

K.D. Bajpai's assessment is not correct. Because before the third *Buddhist* council, *Buddhism* had only two schools, *Theravāda* and *Mahāsaṅghika*. And *Sārvastivāda* was founded after the third *Buddhist* council. It is said that, in the third *Buddhist* council, many monks of *Theravāda*, who did not agree with *Theravādin* idea, left *Magadha* and went to *Kashmir* to found a new sect called *Sārvastivāda*. Through their activities *Kashmir* became the centre of *Buddhist* philosophical studies in the north India.³⁰ *Mahāyāna Buddhism* is said to be present during the time of Asoka. Andrew skilton³¹ states that the third *Buddhist* council was not a great council because it only consisted of the *Theravādin* monks, who belonged to one of the conflicting sects even the *Mahāyāna* monks were not invited. Thus, after the third *Buddhist* council, *Buddhism* had only four sects, *Theravāda*, *Mahāsaṅghika*, *Mahāyāna*, and

²⁷ AIB, pp. 236-61.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ SST, p. 28.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³¹ ACB, p. 47.

Sārvastivāda. And the other *Buddhist* sects seem to appear after the fourth *Buddhist* council held in *Kasmir* during the reign of Kaniska (1st B.C.).

During the reign of Asoka, *Buddhism* not only developed in India, it also was propagated in other Asian countries. N. Dutt³² asserts that after the third *Buddhist* council, Asoka's son and daughter were sent to *Ceylon* to introduce *Buddhism* in that island and the sacred books carried there by word of mouth that were reduced to writing in 88 B.C. in the form in which we have three *pitakas* of *Ceylon* to this day.

D.N. Jha's view point is completely not concerned with reality because *Pāli Tipitakas* were composed after the fourth *Buddhist* council of *Theravāda* in *Ceylon*, under the guidance of Buddhaghosa about fifth century A.D.

Towards the end of his reign, Asoka's grip over the imperial organization became weak. His policy of *dharma* failed to achieve the desirous goal and social tensions continued. His official high-handedness often led to popular resentment. Moreover, *Taxila*, where was possessed by his father early was goaded to rebellion again by ministerial oppression. On the other hand, the existence of several religious sects might have led to tensions and conflicts. Again, Asoka's pro-*Buddhist* policy is said to have antagonised the *Bramins*. Moreover, he used so much money of the state for his charitable public works that led to exhaustion of the state exchequer and inflation was gradually increased. Again, after the conquest of *Kalinga*, Asoka fought no wars and army was used only for parades and public spectacles. The huge army became superfluous and much too costly to maintain.³³ By these reasons, the decline of Maurya dynasty could be appreciated.

After the death of Asoka in 232 B.C., the empire was divided into western and eastern halves. The western part was ruled by Kunala and then for a while by Samprati. The empire was threatened from the north-west by the Bactrian Greeks, to whom it was lost by 180 B.C. From the south, the threat was posed by the Andhra or Sātavāhana, who later came to power in the *Deccan*. The eastern part of the empire with its capital *pataliputra* continued to be governed for nearly half a century by

³² DAI, p. 92.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Asoka's successors. All scholars agree that Brihadratha was the last ruler of the Maurya empire. He is said to be slain in 180 B.C. by his *Brahmana* general Pushyamitra Shunga, who founded an independent dynasty.³⁴ According to N. Dutt³⁵, Pushyamitra Shunga ruled over a large empire that included *Magadha*, *Ayodhyā*, *Vidisā*, *Jalandhara*, and *Sākala* in the *Punjab*. Pushyamitra had to face a Bactrian invasion and came into conflict with the Bactrian princes. He ultimately became victorious and drove them out of *Magadha*, perhaps even beyond the *Sindhu*.

He reigned for 36 years from 187 B.C. to 151 B.C. He was succeeded by his son Agnimitra who was followed by other descendants and all of them remained in power from 151 B.C. to 75 B.C.³⁶ Shunga opposed to *Buddhism* as revived *Brahmanism*, and patronized the *Bhāyavata* cult.³⁷ And prince Heliodoros erected a *Garuda* pillar and described himself as a *Bhāyavata* in the inscription of *Bhilsā* (*Besnagar*). Though some Sungas were anti-*Buddhism*, the people of *Vidisā* expressed their faith in *Mahāyāna Buddhism* as is proved by fine gateway railing around the *Saṅci stūpa*. It was erected by emperor Asoka.

N. Dutt³⁸ states that the Bactrian Greeks, who invaded some parts of northern India shortly after the downfall of *Magadhan* empire. They not only adopted the Indian culture but also made a special contribution to its development in course of two centuries of their rule. In the second century B.C., the Greek rulers, viz. Euthydemus and Eucratides crossed the *Hindukush* and took possession of *Kabul* and north western India. They were followed by Demetrius and Theodorus, who were supporters of *Mahāyānism* as they enshrined the Buddha's relics and erected sanctuaries. According to N. Dutt, two *Kharosthi* inscriptions incised at the instance of the Greek chiefs have been discovered at *Swat* and *Taxila*. It shows that *Mahāyāna Buddhism* had a firm footing in north western India and was welcomed by the foreign rulers.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

³⁵ NMB, p. 1.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Sakas and Mahāyāna Buddhism

According to N. Dutt, in the beginning of the first century B.C., two or three groups of Sakas migrated to India from central Asia. The first group was Sakas from the north (perhaps coming from *Khotan*) took the *pamir* route through the *Karakorum* mountain to *Swat* and *Gandhara*. The second group of Sakas crossed *Hindukush*, under pressure of the Yuezhi to mountain valleys of north eastern Afghanistan and the third group of Sakas coming from south west (*Sakastan*) took control of modern *Sindh* in north Pakistan. N. Dutt³⁹ states that Sakas or the Scythians, who were settled in the *Oxus* region previously occupied by the Greeks, who were ousted from the region in the second century B.C. by the nomadic hordes known as Yuezhis, a name given by the ancient Chinese.⁴⁰ Yuezhis, previously settled near the Chinese frontier, were ousted by other hordes of people. They migrated to the west and compelled Sakas to leave the *Oxus* valley and to go in search of a new land for their settlement.⁴¹

According to Hermann Kulke⁴², the Sakas, who went to the south, as the northern *punjab* was in the hands of Greeks, entered into India through an other route and took possession of the lower *Indus* valley and then spread to the western India. But N. Dutt⁴³ maintains that Sakas of Dyr Daria fell upon Bactria and then entered into India up to *Kaksalilā* and *Mathura* in the north and *Malwa* and *Kathiawad* in the west. They established themselves in *Sindh* and *Punjab* also. Their representatives were known as viceroys (*satraps*) of *Saurashtra* and *Malwa*. The Sakas not only participated in Indian civilization and ideas but also introduced Indian civilization to Central Asia and Far Eastern countries.⁴⁴ Like Greeks, the Sakas also patronized *Buddhism* and especially *Mahāyāna* doctrines were adopted. They gave donations to the *Buddhist sangha*, erected *stūpas*, built many monasteries, temples and installed images of Buddha in their domain.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁰ HDHI₃, p. 72.

⁴¹ NMB, p. 4.

⁴² HDHI₃, p. 72.

⁴³ NMB, p. 5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

The first Saka king in India was Maues. There are various views regarding the dates of Maues. N. Dutt⁴⁵ affirms that Maues ruled from 60 to 50 B.C. and established a principality in the western *Punjab*. Whereas, Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund⁴⁶ maintain that Maues ruled from 94 B.C. to 22 A.D.

After Maues, his successor Azes established a large Indian empire including the north west and the parts of central India from *Gandhara* down to *Mathura* and *Ujjain* and the ways to the coast of *Saurashtra*. According to N. Dutt⁴⁷ the Sakas' empire was continuously ruled by Gondapharnes (30 B.C. – 15 B.C.) and Pakores (15 B.C. – 10 B.C.). But Hermann Kulke⁴⁸ asserts that Gondapharnes was not Saka, he was seemingly a provincial governor of *Arachosia* in southern Afghanistan. Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund hold that the Sakas' career was continued by Azes II, who was the last great king of north-west. In the last decades B.C., the Saka empire showed definite signs of decay as the provincial governors became more powerful. About 20 A.D., the Sakas were replaced by the short-lived Indo-parthian dynasty founded by king Gondapharnes, who reigned from 20 A.D. to 46 A.D.

Though Gondapharnes managed to conquer the central part of the Saka domain, the eastern part around *Mathura* seemingly has remained outside his kingdom because the local Saka Kshatrapas in this region had attained their independence. And *Saurashtra* where independent Saka Kshatrapas still held sway until the time of Guptas.⁴⁹ N. Dutt⁵⁰ maintains that the Sakas sought the help of the *Kusānas* and thereby paved the way for the advent of the *Kusāna* rule in India.

Kusānas and Mahāyāna Buddhism

In the early first century A.D., when Indo-parthians, Sakas and remnants of the Indo-Greeks were still fighting with each other in India, new invaders were already on

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁶ HDHI₃, p. 72.

⁴⁷ NMB, p. 5.

⁴⁸ HDHI₃, p. 74.

⁴⁹ NMB, p. 5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

their way to India. According to Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund⁵¹, the Yuezhi under the leadership of the *Kusāna* came down from Central Asia and swept away all earlier dynasties of north-west in the great campaign of conquest. They established an empire, that extended from central Asia to the eastern *Gangetic* basin.

N. Dutt⁵² states that the *Kusāna*, at that time, dominated over Afghanistan, after ousting the Parthian successors of the Greeks, they drove out the Parthians from the *Gandhara* region. R.C. Dutt⁵³ states that the Yuezhi themselves entered into India, Havishka chief of *Kusāna* conquered *Kashmir* in the first century A.D. and his successor, the great Kaniska extended his empire from *Kabul* to as far as *Gujarat* and *Angra*. In fact, Havishka (140-183 A.D.) was the sixth king of *Kusānas*. He was succeeded by Vasudeva (191-225 A.D.). Kaniska was not successor of Havishka. But, according to Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund, Kujala Kadphises was the first king of *Kusāna* dynasty. In India, Kujala Kadphises, prince of *Kusāna*, vanquished the four other princes about the time of the birth of Christ and established the first *Kusāna* kingdom. He attacked the Parthians and conquered *Kabul* and *Kashmir*. When he died at the age of 80 years, his son, Vima Kadphises I, proceeded to conquer India.

After the death of Vima Kadphises I, his son Vima Kadphises II continued his father's aggressive policy and conquered north India, all the way down to *Mathura* even up to *Varanasi*. Vima Kadphises II was succeeded by Kaniska, the greatest of all *Kusāna* rulers. N. Dutt⁵⁴ agrees with Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund, that Kujala Kadphises was the first king of *Kusānas* but N. Dutt identifies Kujala Kadphises with Vima Kadphises I. and according to him, Kujala Kadphises was succeeded by Kaniska whereas Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund hold that Kujala Kadphises was succeeded by Vima Kadphises I and Kaniska was successor of Vima Kadphises II.⁵⁵ It means that Kaniska was the fourth king of *Kusāna* dynasty.

⁵¹ HDHl₃, p. 74.

⁵² NMB, p. 5.

⁵³ RAI, p. 105.

⁵⁴ NMB, p. 5.

⁵⁵ HDHl₃, pp. 74-6.

D.N. Jha⁵⁶ states that Vima Kadphises I issued gold coins that formed momentous innovation, for after him, *Kusānas* minted coins basically in gold and copper. According to Hermann Kulke⁵⁷, Vima Kadphises I seems to have been close to *Buddhism*, probably *Sārvastivādin* school; but his son Vima Kadphises II seems to have been a devotee of *Brahmanical* god Siva as some of his coins clearly show image of Siva.

Again, an inscription was found at *Taxila*, dated 76 A.D., asserts that Vima Kadphises II was a follower of *Brahmanism*.⁵⁸

Kaniska, the greatest ruler of *Kusānas*, ruled from 78 A.D. to 120 A.D. His capital was *Purushapura* or *Peshwar*; he also constructed a city called *Kaniskapuram*.

After conquering *Kashmir*, Kaniska crossed the *pamir* and defeated the Chinese; he also conquered *Khotan*, *Yarkhand*, and *Kashgar*. He also defeated Saka rulers of *Malwa* and *Gujarat*; he had defeated the ruler of *Magadha* and took Asvaghosa, the great *Mahāyāna Buddhist* philosopher, to his empire. Kaniska used to worship many gods of *Brahmanism* prior to embracing *Buddhism*. Asvaghosa, the *Buddhist* philosopher, probably influenced Kaniska to become a *Buddhist*.

Kaniska extended his empire from the *Oxus* in the west to *Varanasi* in the east and from *Kashmir* in the north via *Malwa* right down to the coast of *Gujarat* in the south.⁵⁹ According to Hermann Kulke⁶⁰, there is no document to prove his hold over Central Asia. However, there is a reference to the defeat of *Kusāna* army by the Chinese general, Pan Chao, at *Khotan* in the year 90 A.D. On the contrary, Romila Thapar⁶¹ evidences that the *Kusāna* dynasty was in the ascendant in Central Asia under Kaniska whose relationship to the earlier kings of countries in Central Asia has been confirmed by the recent discovery of an inscription in Afghanistan. The principal aim of both Vima Kadphises II and Kaniska was seemly to control the trade routes

⁵⁶ DAI, p. 73.

⁵⁷ HDHI₃, p. 75.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ HDHI₃, p. 75.

⁶¹ RPHEI, p. 221.

connecting India with Roma because this trade must have been very profitable to *Kusānas*.

Like Asoka, Kaniska also worked for the spread of *Buddhism* in the whole of India as well as abroad. During the time of Kaniska, *Mahāyāna Buddhism* was considered as a state religion in his empire.⁶² He built many *stūpas*, monasteries, and erected images of the Buddha in his kingdom. The great *stūpa* at *peshawar* is rated as his greatest contribution to *Buddhist* monumental architecture.⁶³

Kaniska was not only strong because his military and political success but also due to his ethics. The *Buddhists* have considered him as a great *Buddhist* ruler in India. During the time of Kaniska, the four main sects of *Buddhism* — *Theravāda*, *Mahāsaṅghika*, *Mahāyāna* and *Sārvastivāda* were further divided into twenty or more sects.⁶⁴ According to William Montgomery M.C. Govern⁶⁵, during the time of Kaniska *Buddhism* had twenty three different sects. *Theravāda* was divided into ten sects, that is, *Theravāda*, *Mahisāsaka*, *Vātsīputrīyas*, *Dharmottara*, *Bhādrayānika*, *Samitīyas*, *Sannagarīkas*, *Dharmagupta*, *Kāsyapīya*, *Sautrāntika* and *Vaibhāsika*.⁶⁶ And *Mahāsaṅghika* was also divided into ten sects, viz. *Mūlamahāsaṅghika*, *Ekavyavahārika*, *Lokottaravādins*, *Kaurukullakās*, *Bahusrutīyas*, *Prajñātivādins*, *Caitya sailas*, *Avara sailas* and *Uttara sailas*.⁶⁷

According to two Kharosthi inscriptions, *Mahāyāna Buddhism* was present during the time of Mauryas. *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, at first, had no sectarian division.⁶⁸ In the second century A.D., Rahurabhadra, Nāgārjuna's master, founded *Madhyamika* school, and then the school was split into two sections in the fifth century A.D., one led by Bhavaviveka and another by Buddhapalita.⁶⁹ And in the third or fourth century A.D., Maitreya-nātha, Asanga's master, founded *Yogācāra* school (*Vijñānavāda*).⁷⁰ The

⁶² NMB, p. 20.

⁶³ DAI, p. 75.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁶⁵ WIM, p. 192.

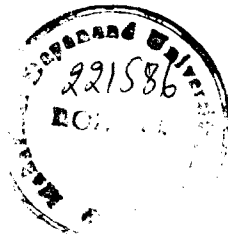
⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ AIB, p. 355.

⁶⁹ KBC, p. 84.

⁷⁰ SIP₂, p. 376.



school was developed by Asanga (4th A.D.), Vasubandhu (4th A.D.), Sthiramti (4th A.D.), Dharmapāla (6th A.D.), Santaraksita (8th A.D.), Karmālasīla (8th A.D.), etc.⁷¹

According to N. Dutt⁷², the reason leading to these divisions is on account of multiple interpretations of the Buddha's teachings. Specially, they did not accept the *Theravāda* doctrine that *Arhat* is the perfect one.⁷³ Mahādeva⁷⁴, the member of *Mahāsaṅghika*, pointed out five imperfections of *Arhat*: *Arhat* is subject to temptation, ignorance, doubt, the *Arhatship* is attained through others' help, and *Arhat* attained the relative truth only.

To resolve conflicting views, and to re-assert the *Vinaya* and *Abhidharma*, the fourth *Buddhist* council was convened at *Kundalvana* in *Kasmir*.⁷⁵ According to N. Dutt⁷⁶, king Kaniska invited 500 *Arhats*, 500 *Bodhisattvas* and 500 *Panditas* to take part in the council in which Mahābhaddanta Vasumitra was Chairman and Asvaghosa was vice Chairman.

After reciting the texts, the council agreed that the texts acknowledged by all *Buddhist* sects are the teachings of the Buddha.⁷⁷ And Kaniska ordered to inscribe all the treatises on copper plates and had them enclosed in stone boxes to be deposited into a *stūpa* for safety.⁷⁸ After the fourth *Buddhist* council, *Buddhism* consisted of *Hīnayāna* (*Sārvastivāda* and its branches) and *Mahāyāna* (*Madhyamika* school). After the fourth *Buddhist* council, *Theravāda* disappeared from India where it flourished.⁷⁹

During the reign of Kaniska, *Mahāyāna* not only developed in India, it also spread to China, Japan, central Asia and Tibet, etc. Andrew Skilton⁸⁰ states that by the silk and sea routes, *Buddhism* went to China in the first century A.D. and to Tibet

⁷¹ JBC, p. 7.

⁷² NMB, p. 20.

⁷³ AIB, p. 277.

⁷⁴ SST, p. 158.

⁷⁵ DAI, p. 75.

⁷⁶ NMB, p. 17.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷⁹ RIP₁, p. 605; RAI, pp. 137-8.

⁸⁰ RPHEI, p. 255.

about the seventh century A.D. Kenneth. K.S. Ch'en⁸¹ says that by the first century A.D. *Mahāyāna Buddhism* had already established itself in central Asia and was poised for the leap across the desert sands to the populous and civilized centres in China. And according to him, in the time of emperor Han Ming Ti (58-75 A.D.), Kasyapa Matanga and Chu Fa Lan brought the *sūtra in Forty Two Sections* to China and they translated the *sūtra* at the White Horse temple in *Loyang*.⁸² Romila Thapar⁸³ asserts that the Central Asian oases like *Yarkand, Khotan, Kashgar, Tashkend, Turfan, Miran, Kuccha, Qarashahr*, and *Tun huang* became the important centres of *Mahāyānism* during the time of Kaniska.

On the other hand, Kaniska not only favoured the *Gandhara* school of *Buddhist* art that had grown out of Greek influences, he also patronized *Mathura* school of art that set style of Indian art.⁸⁴ During the time of Kaniska, the trade between India and Roma as well as the Mediterranean world developed. Kaniska minted coins in gold and copper. His coins showed gods of *Brahmanism*, images of Buddha and images of Greek gods.⁸⁵

Kaniska was succeeded by Huvishka (120-145 A.D.).⁸⁶ D.N. Jha⁸⁷ states that the successors of Kaniska ruled for one hundred years but the *Kusāna* power was on the decline under them. Seemingly the suzerainty of *Kusāna* did not uproot the Sakas from India altogether. So during the time of Vasudeva, the last king of *Kusānas*, the Sakasatrapas became independent rulers of large part of central and western India, which were under their control.⁸⁸ And about 155 A.D., *Mathura* became the head-quarter of the Saka Satrapas, according to the *Mathura* inscriptions.⁸⁹

N. Dutt⁹⁰ asserts that about the middle of the third century A.D., a king of the Sassanian dynasty of Persia defeated Vasudeva, the successor of Huvishka and reduced the *Kusānas* to the position of vassal.

⁸¹ KBC, p. 20.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 29-35.

⁸³ RPHEI, p. 255.

⁸⁴ HDHI₃, p. 77.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ NMB, pp. 27-8.

⁸⁷ DAI, p. 71.

⁸⁸ NMB, p. 27.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ DAI, p. 71.

Sātavāhanas and Mahāyāna Buddhism

According to D.N. Jha, in the north-western *Deccan*, on the ruins of the Maurya empire, arose the kingdom of the *Sātavāhanas* in the first century B.C. with its centre at *Pratishthana* (modern *Paithan* in *Mahārastra*). The *Sātavāhanas* (30 B.C. – 270 A.D.) were known as *Andhras* as they were originated in the *Andhra Pradesh* whence they moved westward along the *Godavari* river, took advantage of the disintegration of Maurya empire, and established themselves in the west. But according to another view, they originally belonged to the western *Deccan* and gradually extended their territorial jurisdiction to the eastern coast which was therefore called *Andhra* in the course of time. They ruled *Andhra Pradesh* including *Deccan* for nearly four hundred years with twenty-nine rulers of the dynasty. According to the earliest inscriptions of *Sātavāhanas* found in the western *Deccan*, the later view may be correct. As mentioned in the records of Asoka⁹¹, it is likely that *Sātavāhanas* held important positions under the Mauryas. When Mauryas' authority became weak, they occupied the throne of Mauryas and established their dynasty.

N. Dutt⁹² and D.N. Jha⁹³ agree that Simuka was the first king of *Sātavāhana* but Romila Thapar⁹⁴ holds that Satakarni was the first ruler of the *Sātavāhana* empire. The date of the *Sātavāhanas* is debatable among historical works of India.

D.N. Jha⁹⁵ asserts that Simuka destroyed the Shunga power and established *Sātavāhana* dynasty about 235 B.C. and ruled for twenty-three years. But *Sātavāhanas* were driven out of western *Deccan* afterwards by the Sakas of the *Kshaharata* clan. The coins and the inscriptions of Saka chief, Nahapana, found around *Nasik*, indicate that the Saka dominated the area towards the end of the first century A.D. or the beginning of the second century A.D.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² NMB, p. 31.

⁹³ DAI, p. 76.

⁹⁴ RPHEI, p. 226.

⁹⁵ DAI, p. 76.

Simuka's successor, Kanha⁹⁶ (212 B.C. – 195 B.C.), extended the territory as far as *Nasik*. The next ruler Satakani I, probably was Kanha's son. Though he ruled for only two years, he achieved a lot of merits; he is said to conquer western *Malwa* and was killed in the battle field.⁹⁷ The successor of Satakarni I was Satakarni II, who ruled from 166 B.C. to 111 B.C.⁹⁸ He extended the boundaries of his realm far to central India across the *Vindhyas* perhaps up to the *Ganges* river; and ruled *Andhra* for nearly fifty six years.⁹⁹ The next important ruler of the dynasty was Gautamiputra Satakarni, who ruled from about 70 A.D. to 95 A.D., brought a large territory under his rule and he overthrew Nahapana, the Saka chief in the 18th year of his reign.¹⁰⁰ Romila Thapar¹⁰¹ states that Gautamiputra had uprooted Sakas and had destroyed the pride of the *Ksatriyas*, promoted the interests of twice-born and stopped the mixing of the four castes.

Mahāyāna Buddhism, it is said to have developed during the time of Gautamiputra.¹⁰² Pulumayi was successor of Gautamiputra Satakarni; he ruled from about 96 A.D. to 119 A.D. He took the empire to its zenith and extended the empire further to the south. He was succeeded by Sri Satakarni who seems to have ruled from 120 A.D. to 149 A.D. The next ruler, Siva Sri Pulamaui ruled from about 150 A.D. to 156 A.D. His son, Siri Siva Khada Satakarni I, succeeded and ruled from 157 A.D. to 159 A.D. Sriyana came to the throne about 160 A.D. and ruled up to 189 A.D. At the end of his reign, Abhiras broke the unity of the *Deccan* by taking the region around *Nasik*.¹⁰³ The next ruler Madhariputra Svami Sakasena succeeded Sriyana; he minted coins bearing lions and elephants motif on them. After his death, the *Sātavāhana* dynasty gradually declined.

Yajnasri Satakarni (174 A.D. – 203 A.D.) was the last king of *Sātavāhanas*; he took advantage of the confusion at *Ujjain* after the death of Rudradaman and

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ RPHEI, p. 226.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ DAI, p. 77.

¹⁰¹ RPHEI, p. 227.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ NMB, p. 31.

invaded the dominion. He re-established *Sātavāhana* authority over the great part of western *Deccan* and central India. He enlarged the famous *Amaravati stūpa* and constructed the famous railing round the *Mahachaitya*. Acharya Nāgarjuna lived in his court for some time. After his death in the third century A.D., the *Sātavāhana* authority declined and the local governors started claiming independent rights. As a result, five minor kingdoms came into being. In the north western *Deccan*, the Abhiras came into prominence. In *Maharashtra* and *Kuntala*, the Chutus became powerful. The Ikshvakus established themselves in *Andhradesha*. In the south eastern part, the Pallavas founded an independent dynasty and grew into a great power by the middle of the sixth century A.D. The Vakataka became powerful in the region of *Vidarbha* (*Bihar*). And *Sātavāhana* dynasty disappeared from the political scene in the third century A.D.¹⁰⁴

It is said that *Andhra Pradesh* was one of cradles of *Mahāyāna Buddhism* during the period of *Sātavāhanas*. A large empire continuous peace during the period of *Sātavāhanas* guaranteed progress and consolidation of *Buddhist* culture in the empire. Though most of *Sātavāhana* kings followed *Brahmanism*, they also patronized *Mahāyānism*. It is said that during the period of *Sātavāhanas*, the *Buddhist* order in *Andhra* rose to the summit of its glory.¹⁰⁵ Many *stūpas*, monasteries were built around *Maharashtra* and *Deccan*. The most famous was the *stūpa* at *Amravati* that was enlarged by king Pulumayi.¹⁰⁶ The *Amravati* school of art also developed in the period and was patronized by the *Sātavāhana* kings.¹⁰⁷ Many famous philosophers of *Mahāyāna* like Avataka, Rahurabhadra, Nāgārjuna I, Nāgārjuna II (Nāgārbodhi), āryadeva, etc. lived during the period of *Sātavāhanas*.¹⁰⁸

The *Madhyamika* school, founded by Rahurabhadra in the second century A.D., was developed during the time of *Sātavāhanas* by Nāgārjuna I, Nāgārjuna II,

¹⁰⁴ DAI, p. 77.

¹⁰⁵ KTBH, p. 87.

¹⁰⁶ NMB, p. 32.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ KTB, p. 87.

āryadeva, etc. And *Sanskrit* came to occupy the place of *prakrit* as the language of inscription.¹⁰⁹

N. Dutt¹¹⁰ affirms that, in the period, *Mahāyānists* started to worship Buddha and *Bodhisattas* as gods. Beside the practice of ethics and meditation of old system, the liberation by faith was emphasized and ten Perfections (*pāramitās*) were considered as the means to the Buddhahood. There is no mention of *Buddhist* missionaries during the period of *Sātavāhanas*.

After the decline of *Sātavāhanas*, *Mahāyāna Buddhism* continued to developed in the region and was patronized by the rulers who came after *Sātavāhanas* such as the Abhiras, Chutus, Ikshvakus, Pallavas and Vakatakas. Romila Thapar¹¹¹ asserts that though these kings performed *Vedic* sacrifices, the women of royal families supported *Buddhist Sangha*.

Guptas and Mahāyāna Buddhism

Evidence on the origin and antecedents of the Gupta family is limited as it seemingly had emerged from obscure beginning. It is said that the Gupta family ruled a small principality in *Magadha* but recent research supports the western *Gangā* plain as a base. Their status is said to be a *Vaishya* caste but some historical evidences record them as *Brahmin* by caste. The *purānas* report that the early Guptas controlled the area along the river *Ganges* from *prayaga* (*Allahabad*) to *Magadha*. But *Pataliputra* and central of *Magadha* were certainly not within their reach. According to R.C. Dutt¹¹², Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund¹¹³, Candragupta I (320 – 335 A.D.) was the first ruler of Guptas, who married a Licchavi princess. Romila Thapar¹¹⁴ asserts that this marriage must have greatly contributed to the rise of the Gupta because the Licchavis was a mighty clan controlling most of north *Bihar* ever since the days of the Buddha. His rule extended over the *Ganges* heartland (*Magadha*,

¹⁰⁹ DAI, p. 78.

¹¹⁰ NMB, p. 33.

¹¹¹ RPHEI, p. 228.

¹¹² RAI, p. 126.

¹¹³ HDHI₃, p. 81.

¹¹⁴ RPHEI, p. 282.

Saketa and *Prayaga*) and he took the title of *Mahārāja adhirāja* (great king of kings).¹¹⁵

Romila Thapar states¹¹⁶ that Samudragupta (335 – 380 A.D.) was the second ruler of Guptas. He, was the most distinguished ruler of the dynasty. He came to the throne about 335 A.D. But N. Dutt¹¹⁷ asserts that Samudragupta got the throne about 320 A.D. and died 380 A.D. According to him, Samudragupta ruled over the territory extending in the east up to the whole of *Bengal*. In the north up to the foothill of *Himalayas* (except *Karmir*), and west *Madrakas* (in the *punjab*). In the south from *Bhilsa* to *Jubbulpore* and thence along the *Vindhya* range of the hills. He conquered *Aranyarājyas* (forest states). He defeated twelve rulers of the *Deccan*, viz, Mahendra of *Dahsina Kosala* (*Drug, Raipur, Bilaspur* and *Sambulpur* districts), Vyāghrarāja of *Mahākantara* (*Jeypore* state, *Orissa*), Hastivarman of *Vengī* (seven miles north of *Ellora*). In short, Samudragupta's empire comprised the whole of northern India (except *Kasmir*), western *Punjab*, *Sind*, *Gujarat*, highlands of *Chatitisgarh* and *Orissa* as far south as *Chingleput*, probably even further.

Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund¹¹⁸ describe in detail the glorious feats in his policy of conquest and annexation. In the land of the *Aryas*, he uprooted many kings and princes between west *Bengal* in the east, *Mathura* in the west, and *Vidisha* in the south west. He annexed the realms, the old kingdom of Panchala in north of the *Ganges*. Many *Nāga* dynasties which had arisen in the areas from *Mathura* to *Vidisha* after the decline of Kusānas, were eliminated. His conquest of *pataliputra* was also achieved in this first great campaign. N. Dutt¹¹⁹ states that in the south, he defeated twelve kings of *Deccan*; but Hermann Kulke¹²⁰ affirms that those southern kings ruled their realms undisturbed after Samudragupta had returned to the north.

¹¹⁵ RAI, p. 126.

¹¹⁶ RPHEI, p. 283.

¹¹⁷ NMB, p. 34.

¹¹⁸ HDHI₃, p. 82.

¹¹⁹ NMB, p. 35.

¹²⁰ HDHI₃, p. 82.

N. Dutt¹²¹ holds that Samudragupta could not rule over his great empire directly, he ruled it through his officials. The Pallavas of the south beyond the *Krishna* river were his feudatories. *Ceylon* and other islands in the south sea maintained friendly relations with him.¹²² After getting victory, he performed a great horse sacrifice and issued gold coins that showed the sacrificial horse on one side and his chief queen on the reverse side.¹²³

Candragupta II (375 A.D. – 415 A.D.) was Samudragupta's son.¹²⁴ Under him, the Gupta empire attained its great glory both in terms of territorial expansion and cultural development. He is said to have combined the aggressive expansionist policy of his father and the strategy of marital alliance of his grandfather. N. Dutt¹²⁵ asserts that his chief enemy was Saka ruler Rudrasimha III of *Gujarat* and *Kathiawad*. His foremost success was his victory over the mighty Saka-Ksatrapa dynasty and the annexation of their prosperous realm in *Gujarat* between 397 A.D. and 409 A.D. and thereby, he ended the Saka rule in India.¹²⁶

Candragupta II controlled most of northern India from the mouth of the *Ganges* to the mouth of the *Indus* and from north *Pakistan* down to the mouth of the *Narmada*. In alliance with Vakatakas, he also controlled a large part of central India. *Assam*, *Nepal*, *Kashmir*, and *Srilanka* were his feudatories.¹²⁷

Under Candragupta II, the internal trade was developed as two eastern and western ports were now in his hand and these ports had greatly augmented trade not only in east and west but also in north and central India.¹²⁸ Candragupta II's reign is often remembered not only for wars but also for his patronage of art and culture as well as the development of trade.

¹²¹ NMB, p. 35.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ HDHI₃, p. 82.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

¹²⁵ NMB, p. 35.

¹²⁶ RPHEI, p. 285.

¹²⁷ HDHI₃, p. 85.

¹²⁸ RPHEI, p. 285.

Kumaragupta (415 – 454) was, according to D.N. Jha¹²⁹, successor of the Candragupta II. It was during the reign of Kumaragupta, a branch of white Hun from Central Asia had occupied *Bactria*. Though White Hun army was threatening north boulder for hundred years, whole the Kumaragupta's empire remained peaceful. Finally, Skandagupta, the successor of Kumaragupta had to fight with Huns to defend the Gupta empire. But the situation became complicated owing to several domestic problems. According to D.N. Jha¹³⁰, his feudatories seemingly asserted independence for themselves and his debased coins caused a deep economic crisis in his empire. But he consolidated his forces against the Huns and convincingly won the battle. The Gupta empire was extended, at his time, from the Bay of *Bengal* to *Arabian Sea*.¹³¹

Skandagupta was succeeded by his nephew Buddhagupta (477 A.D. – 496 A.D.).¹³² During the reign of Buddhagupta, the Hūnas under Toramāna and his son Mihirakula made inroad into Gupta territory while the Maitrakas of *Kathiawad* peninsula, who were formerly feudatories of the Gupta rulers, asserted their independence and adopted the title of great kings. Their examples were followed by other such feudatories. Buddhagupta was succeeded by his brother Narasimhagupta (497 – 570 A.D.), who took the title of Bālāditya, triumphed over Mihirakula.¹³³

Narasimhagupta was persecutor of the *Buddhism* before and now became a great patron of *Buddhism*.¹³⁴ After him, there was political disintegration and in the sixth century A.D., the Maitrakas asserted the independence and became great kings of *Valabhi*.¹³⁵ King Narasimhagupta's son was Kumāragupta II, who defeated the Maukhari king Isānavarman, ruled from 550 to 570 A.D. Kumāragupta II's son Dāmodaragupta also defeated another Maukhari king, but he died in the battle.

Dāmodaragupta's son Mahāsenagupta is described in the *Harsacarita* as the ruler of the territory from *Malwas* to *Bengal*. Mahāsenagupta is said to have revived

¹²⁹ DAI, p. 98.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ NMB, p. 39.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 40-1.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

partially the glories of the Guptas but he had to suffer misfortunes.¹³⁶ The Maitraka king Dharmāditya took possession of a considerable portion of *Malwa*; the Kalacurī king, Sankaragana, occupied *Ujjayinī* in 595 A.D. and Śasānka asserted his independence in *Bengal*. After such discomfitures, Kumāragupta III and his son Madhavagupta had to take shelter in the court of Prabhākaravardhana of Thaneswar, whose mother Mahāsengupta Devi was a sister of Mahāsenagupta.

According to N. Dutt, after the dissolution of the Gupta empire, at the end of the sixth century A.D., a number of states not only asserted their independence but also tried to gain control over other countries. For example, the Śasānka of *Bengal*, who was a feudatory chief (*Mahāsāmanta*) of Mahāsenagupta, freed himself from the yoke of Mahāsenagupta, and extended his dominion from *Bengal* to *Mahendragiri* mountain in the *Ganjam* district in the *Andhra* province. He killed king Rājyavardhana by alluring him with false promises.¹³⁷

Thus, the Gupta reign came to an end by the sixth century A.D. The great empire of Gupta was divided into the small kingdoms of feudatories.

L.M. Joshi states that though all Gupta kings followed *Brahmanism*, they patronized *Buddhism* too, so *Buddhism* had a quantitative and qualitative advancement and specially *Mahāyānism* was prosperous during the time of Guptas. The philosophy, ethics and art, etc of *Mahāyāna Buddhism* influenced the *Purānic Brahmanism* (*Hinduism*) in the period.¹³⁸ The image worship, the doctrine of devotion (*bhakti*) and reciting *Dhārānis* evolved as characteristic features of *Mahāyāna Buddhism* during the time of Guptas.¹³⁹ And the Buddha seems to have been accepted as an incarnation of Viṣṇu by the *Purānas*.¹⁴⁰ Apart from that, the Buddha, Bodhisattva Manjusri, Avalokitesvara and goddess prajñāparamita were the objects of worship. The cult of Amitabha Buddha and his *Sukhāvati* (happiness of pureland) have seemingly attracted

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹³⁸ JBC, pp. 341, 339, 336.

¹³⁹ DAI, p. 88.

¹⁴⁰ JBC, p. 8.

the masses. Even such eminent philosopher Vasubandhu II was also attracted by the happiness of paradise.¹⁴¹

It is said that the vegetarianism of the followers of *Hinduism* seemingly started from the time of Guptas and was influenced by the *Lankavatara sūtra* of *Mahāyānism*.¹⁴²

There were two Vasubandhus lived during the time of Guptas. The former was Vasubandhu I (Asanga's younger brother, author of *Abhidharmakosa*), who was converted to *Mahāyānism* by Asanga, lived at *Purusapura* (Kaniska's capital) in *Gandhara* in the period from 320 A.D. to 400 A.D. Vasubandhu I was patronized by Samudragupta.¹⁴³ The latter was Vasubandhu II, who was Dīnnaga master, lived in *Ayodhyā* during the period from 455 A.D. to 467 A.D.¹⁴⁴ This Vasubandhu was patronized by Skandagupta (456 A.D. – 467 A.D.).¹⁴⁵ Apart from that, there were many famous philosophers of *Mahāyāna* lived in the Gupta period. Some of them were Maitreyanārtha (the founder of the *Yogācāra* school), Asanga (Maitreyanārtha's disciple), Bhāvaviveka and Buddhapālita (both were philosophers of *Madhyamika* school).¹⁴⁶

According to L.M. Joshi, *Madhyamika* school, which was founded by Rahurabhara (Nāgārjuna's master) in the first century A.D., was further developed by Aryadeva (Nāgārjuna's disciple). Towards the middle of the sixth century A.D., the school was split into *Svatantrika* and *Prāsaṅgika* sects; the former was headed by Bhāvaviveka and the latter by Buddhapālita.¹⁴⁷

The *Yogācāra* school, which was founded by Maitreyanārtha in the third century A.D., reached its climax during the age of Samudragupta.¹⁴⁸ Asanga (4th A.D.), Vasubandhu I (4th A.D.), Vasubandhu II (5th A.D.), Sthiramti (5th A.D.),

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 340.

¹⁴³ DAI, p. 97.

¹⁴⁴ AIB, p. 424.

¹⁴⁵ NMB, p. 39.

¹⁴⁶ JBC, p. 7.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ NMB, p. 34.

Dharmapāla (6th A.D.), etc were the exponents of *Yogācāra* school during the period of Guptas.¹⁴⁹

Two most special features of the sixth century A.D. were recorded by L.M. Joshi: (1) the emergence of the *Buddhist* version of science of logic and beginning of intense controversy between the *Buddhist* and the *Brahmanical* schools, and (2) the definite emergence of Esoteric *Buddhism* or *Vajrayāna*. Towards the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth century A.D., there lived Dinnāga, the father of Indian logic, founded a new school of 'critical philosophy' in *Mahāyāna Buddhism*. He is said to have inaugurated an age of philosophical controversies and intellectual tournaments and he is known to have criticized *Naiyāyika* logic theories.¹⁵⁰ Owing to his critical philosophy, the *Mahāyānic* thinkers began to take an active part in philosophical debates and a keen interest in logic theories. The tradition of Dinnāga was continued by his disciples, Samkarasvāmi and Isvarasena.¹⁵¹

Buddhist art was blooming profusely in the time of Guptas. Two main schools of art, which were influenced by *Mahāyāna*, *Mathura* and *Gandhara*, were patronized by the Gupta rulers. K. Antonova¹⁵² asserts that the University of *Nālandā*, which in course of time became the greatest centre of *Buddhist* learning in Asia, was built by Kumāragupta Mahendrāditya. Beside the University of *Nālandā*, the monasteries at *Mathurā* and *Pātaliputra* were active centres of monastic were built during the time of the Guptas.

The wonderful rock-cut *caitya* halls with the remarkable sculptures and frescoes at *Ajanta* are largely the creation of the Gupta period. The art centres of the period were *Sāranātha*, *Mathurā* and *Nālandā* that have yielded large number of images of Buddha, *Bodhisattvas* and other deities. *Buddhist* arts and paintings reached their climax during the time of Guptas.

During the period, many *Mahāyāna* missionaries were sent to the countries of Central Asia and China. A number of the *Sanskrit sūtras*, *Sāstras*, *Vinaya* texts,

¹⁴⁹ JBC, p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² KHI, p. 172.

Dharanis texts, and commentaries of *Mahāyānic* texts were brought to China by Indian monks and were translated into Chinese. The missionary and literary activities of Buddhahabdra, Dharmaksema, Kumārajīva, Paramārtha, etc greatly contributed towards the growth and diffusion of *Buddhist* literature outside India.¹⁵³

According to R.C. Dutt¹⁵⁴, during the reign of Candragupta II, *Fa Hien* (Chinese monk) came to India and stayed therefore fourteen years. His main object was to find out the original *Vinaya* texts, as he believed that Chinese monks were not strictly observant of the disciplinary rules prescribed in the *Vinaya Pitaka*. He is said to have travelled across the country and collected many important informations concerning politics, literature, and art.

Kumārajīva (344-413 A.D.)¹⁵⁵ (son of a Kuchean mother, princess jīva and Indian father Kumārajjana from *Kucī*, Central Asia) came to *Kasmir* to study the *Buddhist Sanskrit* literature and philosophy with his master Bandhudatta. Thereafter he returned to *Kucī* wherefrom he came to China in 401 A.D. He translated many *sūtras* into Chinese, not only *Mahāyāna* texts but also *Sārvastivāda* texts. Among his translations, the version of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra* is popular in the countries practising *Mahāyānism*.

After the Gupta age, *Buddhism* in India gradually declined and it almost disappeared from its motherland mainly due to the devastation of Muslims. The *Mahāyānism* was also not an exception.

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¹⁵³ JBC, p. 9.

¹⁵⁴ RAI, pp. 127-8.

¹⁵⁵ ACB, p. 163; NMB, p. 27.

CHAPTER THREE

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM

The period from the post *Maurya* to *Gupta* ages, is known for round development of Indian economy. It could be seen in terms of cities teaming with industries, handcrafts, and commerces and numerous agricultural settlements in the countryside. *Mahāyāna* Buddhism emerged and grew in India in this economic background of the period. It was a favourable age for its propagation inland as well as outside India.

(1) Agriculture

Agriculture consisted of both cultivation of crops and breeding of animals.

Cultivation: The cultivations of wet paddy, wheat and barley were produced at mass a large scale in the plains such as the plains of *Indus* and its tributaries; the areas of *Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan*; the plains of *Godavari* river; and the plains of *Krishna* river in south India. Specially the *Gangetic* basin blessed with perennial flow of water in the river Ganges as well as abundant amount of rains.¹ This area was suitable for cultivation of wet paddy.

R.S. Sharma² holds that: the sandy and loamy soil of these plains helped peasants to produce sufficient surplus not only for their own needs but also to meet the needs of the people living in towns and engaged in trade and commerce. Although, the soil was fertile yet rice was just sufficient for the needs in the country. There was not surplus that served for trade and urbanization. As a result, there is not any impressive godowns or grain storehouse to be documented in the excavations or in the literature. It seems the urban centers depended on the seasonal supply of rice and in cases of scarcity, villages and the common masses had to bear the brunt.

The main products of agriculture, during the period of study, were rice, wheat, barley and some kinds of pulses that were planted across India; pepper, musk, and saffron were major items of export. Romila Thapar³ states that the exchange of pepper

¹ KTHB, p. 3.

² RPSEH, p. 154.

³ RPHEI, p. 232.

brought back many golden and silver coins from Roma. The cultivation of cotton in the neighbourhood of *Benares* served for the inland weaving industries and export. Sugarcane and coconut were also important products served for industries. Millet was planted popularly in the south plains where the climate is drier and soil is not fertile.

Equipped with the iron ploughshare and implements in large quantities, intensive cultivation of fields was done. R.S. Sharma⁴ maintains that fields were ploughed twice or thrice and the peasants divided their lands according to crops.

A significant development in cultivation was the beginning of transplantation of wet paddy. From the later *Vedic* time, paddy was only planted directly as a rainy season crop that ripened in 90 days. The peasants did not know the use of agricultural technique for their transplantation. Again, the periodical droughts and floods caused scarcity that not only ate away the surplus but also caused famine conditions, making the accumulation of surplus impossible. The producer, therefore, suffered more than the privileged consumers in the city who had enough money to buy food from producers from distant areas where conditions have not been adverse.

It is said that, after the time of *Mauryas*, agriculture became the main form of productive labour. The ancient Indians were skilled cultivators. They were well-versed assessing the nature and properties of the various soils. In areas with the more fertile soil, cultivators succeeded in reaping two or even three crops in one year. Paddy was perhaps, main product during the period of study.

G. Kotavsky⁵ shows that rice grains were found in the layers of earth related to the *Maurya* period when archeologist excavated the settlements in Northern and Central India. In *Pāli* Buddhist texts⁶, there are numerous references to good harvest of rice in *Magadha*. According to D.N. Jha⁷, the fertility of the soil in *Gangā* valley and the large plains in the south led to the rise of a new class of rich peasant proprietors in the post *Mauryan* era. These rich peasants were in a position to pay taxes and thus contributed to the growth of the state revenue system.

⁴ RPSEH, p. 162.

⁵ KHI, p. 84.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ DAI, p. 50.

Parallel with equipment of iron implements for agriculture, the system of irrigation was established by the state. D.N. Jha⁸ also states that Pushyagupta, one of the governors of Chandragupta had built a dam across a river near *Girnar* in *Saurashtra*. The most famous ruler Rudradānam in the year 150 A.D. also constructed the *Sudarsana* lake in the *Saurashtra*.⁹ Khāravēla also had an extension of irrigation canal in *Kalinga* that was originally dug by a Nanda king.¹⁰ Many tanks seem to have been constructed by Saka and Kusāna chiefs in North-western India, ring wells and lakes were also dug by individuals in *Uttar Pradesh* to ensure regular supply of water for cultivation.¹¹ Besides, making use of advance knowledge of agriculture, the supervisor of water had often the sensible distribution and measurement of water for irrigation and inspected sluices by which water is distributed into the branch channels, so that everybody might enjoy his fair share of the benefit. Kautilya¹² states that irrigation cess amounted to one fifth, one fourth or one third of the produce of irrigated soil, especially in western *Uttar Pradesh* and *Punjab* where a regular supply of water could ensure normal yield of crops. Perhaps canals were not much in use. For comparatively small holdings in the time of *Guptas* irrigation by wells or tanks was considered enough for cultivation.

Water was an important factor in the cultivation, soil was ploughed only when it had a sufficient quantity of humidity in it because without humidity seeds simply would not germinate. A peasant ploughed his land for rice cultivation only if a sufficient supply of water was available throughout the season and the soil was quite wet and soft at the time of the ploughing. Moreover, before rice saplings were planted, the land was thoroughly kneaded with a heavy wooden plank and this process was most important part of wet rice cultivation and other farm products. It is noticed that the peasants understood the vast potentiality of using manure. They used cow dung or other cattle dung for manuring their fields.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² RPSEH, pp. 170-1.

Instead of passively exploiting the existing land, the peasants extended their lands by clearing forests and bringing more area under cultivation, resulting in an increase in the number and size of agricultural holdings. Slaves and forced labour, probably, were used for this purpose. The extension of arable land by clearing wood land was permitted by *Manu*. He opined that the king could injure trees that bear fruits or flowers in order to extend cultivation and to perform sacrifices.¹³

As above, the clearance of forests was first performed by the state or the communities of peasants and later on the state efforts had been replaced by individual efforts. Person, who brought land under use, was called the owner of land. The *Millindapanhō* refers to the individual who clears forest and take other steps for making the land fit for cultivation.

Most of the scholars highlight the clearance of forest for extensive cultivation. However, Prof. K.T.S. Sarao¹⁴ undervalues these efforts. According to him, all the lands surely could not have been covered by forests. He gives an instance that in *Kanpur* district not more than 3% of the cultivable land was actually needed for cultivation during the period of study and most of cultivable land available had soft alluvial soils along the rivers and lakes and other open areas in the forests. He also affirms that the population of the period largely depended on hunting and various types of wild growth. It is a moot point whether there was any serious need for clearing forest land on a large scale for the purpose of cultivation. By these evidences, he comes to conclusion that there was no need to have clearance of forests for extension of cultivated land in ancient India.¹⁵ Prof K.T.S. Sarao's position could be appreciated only in case southern plains where rains are scant; climate drier; and big trees not noticeable, whereas the *Gangā* plains where climate was wet, abundant amount of rains making jungles rapidly developed. Thus the spurt in agrarian expansion, the peasants of *Gangā* plains must have the clearance of jungles.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹⁴ KONB, p. 63.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Beside the clearance of forests, burning forests were also done for this purpose. This evidence is found in the comment by Abhayasūri to a passage of a *Jain* canonical text.¹⁶ Another book of *Brahmanism* also gives some clue to the material basis of this expansion. The *Satapatha Brahmana*¹⁷ states that Videgha Mahāva went on burning the forests till he reached *Sadānīra* in *North Bihar*.

Burning forests could not be done on a considerable scale if the use of iron axe had been not supplemented for cutting trees, large scale clearing of land by the state and by communities of peasant and the cultivation of the crown land under the direct supervision of its officers led to an unprecedented growth of settled agriculture, especially in the *Gangetic* valley and the plains of South India. These areas provided enough surplus to cater needs of the people.

When jungles were cleared, the state carried out its management over these areas and founded new settlements, simultaneously sought to rehabilitate the decaying ones by drafting surplus population from overpopulated regions. During the period of study, land was granted not only ordinary peasants but to the *Sūdras* also. The *sūdras* were encouraged to settle in the settlements and they were granted lands. But the land thus granted could not be sold, mortgaged or inherited. If the cultivators failed to cultivate the plots allotted to them, the land was transferred to others for cultivation.

In order to bring virgin soil under cultivation, the cultivators were allowed remissions of taxes and other concessions in procuring cattle, seeds and loans and cultivators would repay debts when they had a life of plenty. D.N. Jha¹⁸ also affirms that during the *Maurya* period, a section of *Sūdras*, who were hitherto agricultural labourers, were settled with land in the newly colonized areas. They also engaged as sharecroppers on crown lands. Forced labour was imposed on them on a much larger scale than in the earlier period.

The land grant in India did not start in the first century A.D. as some inscriptional evidences show, it rather, actually started during the reign of *Mauryas*,

¹⁶ RPSEH, p. 162.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹⁸ DAI, p. 64.

the third century B.C. And the land was also granted to *Brahmanas* and Buddhist monks in the reigns of Sātavāhanas, Kusānas, and Guptas from the first century to the sixth century A.D.

According to D.N. Jha¹⁹, in the first century A.D., the Sātavāhana started the practice of donating land in the western *Deccan* with fiscal and administrative immunities to *Brahmanas* and Buddhist monks which eventually weakened their central authority. Initially such grants were accompanied by exemption from the payment of taxes, but gradually the Sātavāhanas seem to have also surrendered administrative rights to the doneers. In a record of second century A.D.²⁰, the Sātavāhana ruler, Gautamiputra Shatakarni, is said to have instructed the royal officials not to interfere with the administration of the donated fields or villages. In such a situation, the beneficiaries were left free to manage all affairs related the donated lands. Thus gifted villages became semi-independent administrative pockets. It led to erosion of royal control over the countryside. Land grants were ostensibly made on religious grounds but the underlying idea of donating land was to extend the area of cultivation through private efforts.

The land grants to priests continued during the time of Kusānas. An inscription of the second century A.D.²¹ says that a village was offered to *Brahmanas*. R.S. Sharma²² holds that there is no record of land grant to Buddhist monks under the reign of Kaniska and his several successors though they were enthusiastic champions of Buddhism. In the age of Guptas, the land was also granted to people in Northern and Eastern *Bengal* and in the Eastern part of modern *Madhya Pradesh*. The *Bengal* grants were results of sale transactions effected by individuals and involved the transfer of plots of land. But the central India grants were made by feudatories who gave away villages. Beside land grants to people, the Gupta rulers offered gifts of land to *Brahmana* and Buddhist monks. Gradually the cultivated lands in *Gangā* basin, *Gujarat* and *Maharashtra* were the objects of gift.²³ The lands granted to individuals

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁰ RPSEH, p. 162.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

could be purchased or mortgaged whereas there is no evidence of purchase of religious lands for secular purpose. Monks and lay worshippers could freely dispose of their lands only for religious purpose. Fa Hien²⁴ states that monasteries and temples were granted fields and gardens with husbandmen and cattle to cultivate them.

It could be inferred from above evidences that the life of mendicant monks during the periods from the first century to the sixth century A.D. was not exalted. It was only praised in the time of the Buddha upto the end of third century B.C. The urban economy required a settled life of monks. Each monastery was granted lands with husbandmen and cattle to cultivate them. The Buddhist monks of those days were allowed to possess gold, silver, money; to do cooking in monastery; take three meals in a day, etc. Their keeping money and other properties was not for luxurious lives but for a vital needs of Buddhism in the age of a developed commodity economy. Such developments led to disappearance of *Theravāda* from India later on.

Agricultural tax

The agricultural tax was also an important feature of rural economy. The major portion of land continued to be in possession of free peasants who paid revenues directly to the state. According to *Arthashastra*, agricultural tax seems to have been levied at the rate of 1/6th of the produce. The Greek accounts suggest the rate as 1/4th. In addition to the principal land taxes, water cess was also levied.²⁵ Share-cropping also contributed substantial income to the state. The peasants had often to pay tax that was assessed on groups of villages.²⁶ In the post Maurya period, the local officials gradually started assuming economic power through excessive exploitation of people. Besides having to pay a fixed portion of their produce as regular revenues to the state, the peasants were subjected to various impositions such as frontier tax, tribute to the divisional officers and cash payment. Moreover, the villagers had to make not only various kinds of contribution to royal troops and officials but also they had to offer the gifts of affection to *Brahmanas* in any religious ceremony. Vātsyāyana²⁷ informs that,

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ DAI, p. 62.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ RPSEH, p. 193.

during that period, the peasant women were compelled to fill up the granaries of the village headman, taking things into or out of his house, cleansing or decorating his residence, working in his fields and spinning yarn of cotton, wool, flax or hemp for his clothes, etc. Their measure of collecting tax is said to be extremely heartless. D.N. Jha²⁸ states that the state treasury was replenished by some oppressive taxation measures. According to him, the collection of tax from people either by beating and binding or dispossessing them of their earnings. Although the details of tax collecting machinery are not known. Jha holds that the Nanda king of *Magadha* who amassed wealth by raising taxes from people.²⁹ Moreover, the feudal land-owners collected grain from peasants which enabled them to live comfortably.³⁰

Thus, the more agricultural economy developed, the more feudal mandarindomes and landowners exploited peasants, who lived a life of bitterness, poverty and hardship.

Breeding animals

Cattle breeding was one of the important agricultural activities in ancient India. It is said that cultivation and breeding always go together in leading to social surplus, a precondition for commerce and urbanization. When agriculture is always dependent natural, breeding remains a more assured means of peasant's livelihood. Cattle formed their wealth as well as a basis for a developed socio-economic life.

All historians agree that when the early *Aryans* settled down in India, they settled as agriculturists and they appreciated the importance of cattle. Their initial works were to domesticate animals and feed them for use in cultivation and as foodstuff. The domesticated birds and animals such as fowl, duck, goose, goat, pig, sheep, etc were maintained for meat and family sacrifices. Oxen and buffaloes were used for ploughing and transportation. Horses could be used for ploughing but they were not fit to draw ploughs in muddy soil, this probably rendered them unfit for Indian agriculture and oxen took their place.

²⁸ DAI, p. 50.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ RPSEH, p. 166.

R.S. Sharma³¹ refers to the yoking of six, eight, twelve and even twenty four oxen for the ploughing, indicating deep ploughing.

This practice might have been there during the times of Mauryas, Kusāna and Sātavāhanas when many large state farms existed. The smaller plots in the time of Guptas certainly could not use the plough driven by many oxen like that. Elephants and horses were also used in wars. It is said that the chiefs of ancient Indian kingdoms often fought wars in order to annex more territories. Horses and elephants were used in wars. It is a well documented fact that in the Mauryas time, the victory in battles depended on strength of elephants. So several elephant forests were preserved and their killing was prohibited. Moreover, elephants were used to bring timbers from deep mountains that man could not do. In ancient India, elephants and other cattle used for barter. D.N. Jha³² states that Chandragupta, the founder of Maurya dynasty, made a gift of 500 elephants to the Greek general and attained the territory cross the *Indus*. Oxen and mules were caravan animals, though in the desert camels were used. Transportation in rough hill terrains or in alleys, asses were the most serviceable animals.³³

The other purpose of breeding was for food and religious sacrifices. The horse sacrifice finds mention in the *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*.³⁴ However, it happened rarely in comparison to the sacrifices of other cattles.³⁵ It is interesting to say that in *Vedic* time people had not objection to eating beef³⁶ and in the Epic literature time, beef and buffalo meats were freely used by people.³⁷ The prohibition of beef eating might have happened in the time of Guptas in the sixth century A.D., after the composition of eighteen *Purānas*.³⁸ D.N. Jha³⁹ informs that after revival of *Hinduism* in the age of Guptas, the vegetarianism finds mention.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

³² DAI, p. 28.

³³ RPHEI, p. 235.

³⁴ RPU, p. 149.

³⁵ DCCAI, p. 102.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ RPHEI, p. 235.

³⁸ DAI, pp. 112-5.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

In the post Mauryan era, cattle raising became the chief occupation of people and thus village economy was established. Apart from treatment of animals, some information on animal husbandry is also available. In *Agni Purāna*, an event is found where kings were envisaged to preserve the cattle of the country. The *Arthasastra* mentions a government officer called superintendent of cattle whose exclusive duties were to supervise livestock in the country. The superintendent was expected to maintain cattle census and classification of them was done according to their sex and abilities.

In ancient India, every village is said to have its own pasture land, common rights over pasture was recognized by the state. Uncultivated lands were developed into pastures or cultivated lands were available for grazing after crops had been harvested. The weeds, plants, stumps of crops and grass constituted fodder. The cultivation of fodder crops and their conversion into silage was known to the ancient Indians. In the *Arthasastra*, it is reported that yield of milk and butter depends on the nature of feed, soil and quality of fodder. The manner in which the stock was fed is very important. And this work also says of the professional herdsmen who took animals for grazing in the morning and brought them back in the evening. In the case of death of an animal, the herdsmen should surrender to the owner the skin, horns, bones, etc of the dead animal. According to *Manu*, for maintaining 100 cows, one heifer per year shall be given to herdsmen as wages and for maintaining 200 milch cows, he shall be allowed to milk all of them once every 8 days as wages.

As known, the introduction of iron into agriculture led to the development of more efficient plough cultivation that was mainly dependent on animal husbandry. The newly developed feature of the social and economic life of the people did not fit with the *Vedic* ritualism and animal sacrifices that killed a large portion of animals, the main driving force of the new plough agriculture. By this reason, two religions, *Jainism* and *Mahāyānism* opposed the *Vedic* sacrifices. Simultaneously, *Mahāyānists* not only preached the doctrine of *ahimsā* but also denied the role of God in the creation of the world. The concept of *ahimsā* popularized for the first time, helped the ancient agriculture to develop. But undue emphasis on *ahimsā* in the doctrine of *Jainism* made the agriculturists to lose their hearts because their profession necessarily kills insects and

pests. Unlike the *Upaniṣad*, *Jainism* preached that the purification of soul can not be achieved through knowledge but only through a long course of fasting, rigorous practice of *ahimsā*...⁴⁰ D.N. Jha⁴¹ states that the *Jainas* practised the doctrine of *ahimsā* absurdly. Even an unconscious killing of an ant at the time of walking was also considered sinful. They would not drink water without straining it for fear of killing an insect. They also wore a muslin mask covering the mouth not only for hygiene but also to save life floating in the air. So Mahāvira's idea was hardly accepted by peasants, artisans and craftsmen whose occupations endangered the life of other creatures. In order to avoid killing, the *Jainas* specialized in the traffic of manufactured goods and confined themselves to financial transactions. This is the reason why *Jainism* came to be increasingly associated with the spread of urban culture and maritime trade. Their gathering in Indian western coast in view of foreign trade facilities supports the contention.

Unlike *Jainism*, *Mahāyānism* moderated in its emphasis on the doctrine of *ahimsā*. Though it advised its followers to practise non-killing but its stress on the non-killing of the cattle was deliberate. D.D. Kosambi⁴² extracts a good passage from *Sutta Nipāta* that: "Cattle are our friends, just like parents and other relatives, for cultivation depends upon them..."

From the quoted passage above, Buddhism sees clearly the importance of cattle in ancient Indian agriculture and the fate of peasantry depended on them.

(2) Industries

Industry, during the period of study, consisted of both the heavy and light ones. The former included metallurgical industries and the latter belonged to the weaving, spinning, etc.

Metallurgical industry

Metallurgical industry played an important role in the national economy. Iron, copper, bronze, tin, lead, silver and gold, etc were the major raw materials of metallurgical industries producing tools and implements of agriculture; household

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² DCCAI, p. 103.

appliances; weapons of war; ornaments; images of god; and coins. Literary sources suggest different craftsmen in each of these metals, as iron smith is mentioned in the *Angavijja*⁴³, copper and bronze-smiths in the *Milindapanho*⁴⁴ and gold-smith in the *Saundaranand*.⁴⁵ Although the archaeological evidence for metal work is not very encouraging, as most of the material remains have been corroded by devastation of time. Whatever metal objects which have survived and found, suggest undoubtedly a advanced metallurgical technology in the post Maurya period.

Among metals, iron was considered as the most important one and the widespread use of iron made a significant contribution in the Indian economy. The technical advance of iron led to the extensive cultivation in agriculture; the urbanization; the developments of trade and commerce. The enhanced knowledge in technology of iron smelting for manufacturing of agricultural and non-agricultural instruments and devices contributed a lot in the growth of Indian economy. Iron slags and lumps of Kusāna levels have been discovered from *Hatt* excavations.⁴⁶ A furnace for smelting metal has been excavated in the *Deccan* at *Kodumanal* in the south was a centre for the production of iron artifacts.⁴⁷ Moreover, a reference has already been made to the iron pillar of Chandragupta age (400 CAD) that is standing near *Kutab Minar*, South *Delhi*. That iron pillar is 7m high and weighing 6 tones that is a historical relic testifying to the metallurgical art of ancient India. The technical knowledge in iron working had reached its high watermark in the period. A factor that transformed the economic life around 100 B.C. onwards was the use of iron on a wide scale than in the preceding period. D.N. Jha⁴⁸ states the diffusion of the new technology was facilitated by the use of bellows that made possible the production of iron tools and implements on a large scale. Iron ploughshare necessary for the deep ploughing might have come into wide use and the fields were ploughed twice or thrice thereby increasing the agriculture output manifold. The iron objects such as ploughshares, adzes, hooks, anvils, hammers, arrow heads, caltrops, spears, swords,

⁴³ AIA, p. 163.

⁴⁴ MLP, V₄, p. 210.

⁴⁵ JSA.XV, pp. 68-9.

⁴⁶ Housed in M.D.U., Rohtak (archaeological museum)

⁴⁷ RPHEI, p. 230.

⁴⁸ DAI, p. 28.

daggers, knives, spades, etc during the times of Kusānas and Sātavāhanas had been found at *Kosambi, Prahladpur, Banares, Khairadih, and Mason* (all in eastern *Uttar Pradesh*)⁴⁹ and in *Chirand, Vaisali, Patna, Sonpur and Campā* (all in *Bihar*)⁵⁰ *Nāsika, Taxila, Sirkap, Maski* (North India)⁵¹, *Amaravatī, Mysore* (South India)⁵², etc. Even in urban settlements, a good number of such tools have been discovered. Many iron tools consisting of axes, adzes, knives, sickles, etc belonged to the early layers of the NBPW phase (North black painted ware) have been found at *Kosambi* and contemporaneous to the phase axes have been found at *Sonpur* in *Gaya* district. A ploughshare belonged to the second period of the PGW phase (painted Gray ware) has been reported from *Jakhera* in *Eta* district in western U.P., it may well have belonged to the middle of the first millennium B.C., etc. R.S. Sharma⁵³ holds that the use of iron tools and implements in large quantities hastened the process of clearance of jungles in Eastern *Uttar Pradesh* and in *Bihar*. And, according to him, the advance of iron technology was the contribution of the builders who carved images of lions on the stone pillars or designs in royal palaces and inscriptions.⁵⁴ Besides iron objects, copper, steel, lead, braze, etc were also used for manufacturing of tools used in agriculture, households, worshipping, etc. Ores of these metals were excavated at many places in India. Copper was found in *Taxila, Mathura, Dhalbhum, Singbhuni (Magadha), Sāvatti, Amaravatī, Mysore*. Lead has been found at *Manbhumi, Singbhumi, Patna*, etc.

Various copper objects of the time of Sātavāhanas and Kusānas have been found at many sites. These objects include household objects, weapon, statues, ornaments, tools and coins. Copper bowls, dishes, one-handled jugs, etc have been found at *Nevāsa* and *Kolhapur*. All these objects belonged to the Sātavāhana period.⁵⁵ Besides, bowls, cups and handled jugs have been found at *Sirkāp* in *Taxila* show the

⁴⁹ RPSEH, pp. 160-1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² DCCAI, pp. 98-9.

⁵³ RPSEH, pp. 160-2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ MT, pp. 590-1.

use of copper vessels during Kusāna period. Two hanging lamps belonged to the time of Sātavāhanas found at *Brahampuri* and *Amarāvati*.⁵⁶

Steel was also an important metal in India; it is generally accepted that steel exploitations in India commenced around 300 B.C. The steel products were swords that were used in wars. It is claimed the famous 'wootz' steel from which *Demascus* swords were made, was originally from south India.

The manufacture of bronze articles that became more abundant from the time of Kusānas onwards. Bronze vessels found at *Bhirmound* in *Taxila*, *Nevasa*, *Kolhāpur* and *Sirkap* show the use of bronze vessels in Sātavāhanas and Kusanas periods.⁵⁷ Bronze bangles were found in *Nāgdā* and *Taxila*.⁵⁸ A fish hook belonged to the time of Sātavāhana found in *Maheswar*.⁵⁹ That shows fishery to develop in the time of Sātavāhana period. Besides, a variety of brass, zinc, antimony and red arsenic belonged to the times from the first to the fourth century A.D. were mentioned.⁶⁰ These all betokens considerable advance and specialization in the working of metal.

Gold was not popular before the time of Vima Kadphises. He, first time in Indian history, issued gold coins. After Vima, Kusānas minted coins basically in gold and copper.⁶¹ Archaeological evidence testifies that the gold mines in *Dhalbhum*, *Chotanagpur* and *Mysore* were worked from the time of Maurya and they were exploited in large quantity during the time of Kusānas onwards.⁶² The literary sources in the time of study were full of references to golden ornaments, miscellaneous and proficient gold-smiths but they seldom mention silver. The *Saundaranand*⁶³ refers to the working in gold by gold-smiths in fire and manufacturing different types of ornaments. An evidence comes from Pānini⁶⁴ that the work of gold-smiths who had to perform the threefold work, i.g making ornaments from gold and silver, melting old

⁵⁶ SAS, p. 142.

⁵⁷ MT, p. 590.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ SEMN, p. 208.

⁶⁰ RPSEH, p. 182.

⁶¹ DAI, p. 75.

⁶² RPHEI, p. 235.

⁶³ JSA, Vol. XV, p. 69.

⁶⁴ AIP, pp. 234-5.

ornaments to make new ones and the work of polishing. The Kusāna inscription refers to both gold and diamond.⁶⁵

The gold objects were found at many places in ancient India. Necklaces of gold of Kusānas period have been discovered at *Sirkap* and *Bhirmound (Taxila)*. The art of making gold subjects in the time of Kusāna reached a high standard. Apart necklaces, many finger rings, ear rings at Kusāna period were found in *Taxila* and *Peddāmudiyam*.⁶⁶

The excavations at *Sirkāp* in *Taxila* found silver bowls dishes of Kusāna period and wine pots of the Sātavāhana age. Apart from that, many ear rings, bangles, anklets made by silver belonged to the time of Kusāna were found at *Taxila*.⁶⁷ The silver mines in *Punjab*, *Haryāna*, and *Rajasthan* in Kusāna territory in North West India were able to produce ample silver.⁶⁸ Hence silver was used in large scale in the Kusāna period. Tin was obtained from alluvial deposits in *Punjab* and *Aravalli* regions.⁶⁹ The tin objects belonged Kusāna – Sātavāhana ages were not found at any place. Perhaps the use of tin at the time was not in large scale.

Light Industry

The light industry consisted of weaving industry and others were popular during the period of study.

The Weaving Industry

The spinning and weaving of cotton and silk involved various regional techniques. Romila Thapar⁷⁰ states that the technique of weaving, dying, and stitching reached high levels during the times of Kusāna and Sātavāhana. The cotton cloth has been as fine as the slough of a snake. Besides the use of the cotton carder's sow, an implement, which was still in use in many places, improved to quality of cotton. Along with typical mode of Indian weaving, the new modes of weaving that came from

⁶⁵ SEI, p. 383.

⁶⁶ MT, p. 634.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ SEG, p. 53.

⁶⁹ RPSEH, p. 176.

⁷⁰ RPHEI, p. 235.

central Asia, Iran and China were also introduced and that impacted ancient Indian weaving industry significantly.⁷¹

Archaeological evidences prove the advance of weaving industry of the period. Marshall J.⁷² holds that besides a number of spindle whorls from the times of Kusāna – Sātavāhana were found at *Saikan Dheri*, *Taxilā* and *Hastināpur* which throw light on the tools used for spinning and some reels that probably been used for reeling yarn. On the other hand, inscriptions and literary records also mention weavers, dyers and special techniques applied. An inscription from *Mathura* records that *Mathura* had acquired special celebrity for its manufacture of *Sataka*, a special kind of cloth and the weavers probably owed their affluence to trade in textiles produced in *Mathura*.⁷³ Patanjali also testifies to the special celebrity attained by *Mathura* in the manufacture of textiles, especially *Sataka*, a kind of cloth.⁷⁴

Dyeing was a thriving craft in some towns in south India. A brick built dyeing vast had been discovered at *Uraiyr*, a suburb of *Tiruchirapalli* town in *Tamil Nandu*.⁷⁵ Similar dyeing vasts were excavated at *Arikamedu*.⁷⁶ These structures belonged to 1st-3rd centuries A.D., during which handloom textile industry flourished in these towns. Besides, a large number of available terra-cottas, sculptures described the complicated clothes and their modes that show the highly developed textile activities.

Similarly some shreds of pottery of Kusāna period with internal textile designs were found at *Rajasthan* during excavations. They symbolized to various textile types that were in fashion in *Rajasthan* during the time of Kusānas. The inscriptions found at central and western India show that in central and western India the crafts of silk weavers flourished well for they were organized in guilds.⁷⁷ The guild of weavers was also recorded in a *Nāsik* inscription.⁷⁸

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² MT, Vol. II, p. 502.

⁷³ RPSEH, p. 183.

⁷⁴ DAI, p. 83.

⁷⁵ RPSEH, p. 183.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

The materials used for the weaving industry were perhaps cotton, linen, jute, wool, and hemp.⁷⁹ The weaving industries worked in urban centres such as *Benares*, *Kutumbara*, *Aprānta*, *Ariaka*, *Kalinga*, *Masuliputtam* (*Andhra Pradesh*), *Ujjain*, *Tāgrā*, *Dācca*, *Gujarat*. Among these cities, *Benares*, where *Kasi* cloth⁸⁰ was manufactured, was well known. Muslins that attracted Roma traders, and the clothes of various kinds and texture are also mentioned in the *Milindapanhō*.⁸¹

R.S. Sharma⁸² states that there were nine kinds of clothes used during the periods of Kusānas and Sātavāhanas. These cloth were *Kalingam*, *Gangetic*, *Monachi*, *Sagmatogene*, *Molochini*, *Argāritic*, *Māsuliputtam*, *Masalia* and *Sataka*. *Kalingam* was the cloth that was woven by *Nāga* tribes of *Kalinga* country. *Gangetic*, the finest muslin manufactured in *Dacca* district. *Manachi*, the best sort of cotton cloth, produced in *Gujarat*. *Sagmatogene*, coarse cotton used for stuffing and padding and produced in *Gujarāt*. *Molochini*, coarse mellow coloured dyed cloth produced in *Gujarat*, *Ujjain*, and *Tāgrā*. *Argāritic*, muslin, produced in *Tiruchirapalli* and *Janjor*. *Māsuliputtam*, muslin, produced in large quantity in *Andhra Pradesh*. *Masālia*, coarse raw cotton cloth, produced in large quantity in *Ariacā*. And *Sataka*, a special kind of cotton cloth, made in *Mathura*.

On the other hand, the cultivation of mulberry and feeding silkworm in the period were also mentioned in literary sources. The various kinds of silk found in the literature are *Pattāmsūka*, *Kauseya*, and *Dhauta patta*, etc. *Pattamsuka* means plain white silk; *Kauseya* means the silk that obtained from cocoons that were spun by the silk-worms. *Dhautapatta* seemly was a washed silk. Apart from these kinds of silk, the variegated silk that was still retained in *saris* of *Gujarāt*.

According to R.S. Sharma⁸³, the art of spinning of silk consisted of many stages. Firstly, the sericin could be softened by boiling in water and the filaments got loosened and was pulled from the cocoons, then the worker whipped the water with a

⁷⁹ ASE, p. 75.

⁸⁰ DVD, p. 296.

⁸¹ MLP, p. 3.

⁸² RPSEH, p. 182.

⁸³ *Ibid*.

bamboo stick to which the filaments got adhered. The ends of several cocoons run through the eye in small porcelain discs and were joined to make yarn and this process was best done by hand. After each cocoon was exhausted the new one needs to be joined carefully. Thus, an individual filament can be thousand yarns long and the filaments were twisted. Then a process of weaving was performed.

Woolen clothes were important objects in the ancient India. Woolen clothes could be made by yarns from the bark, sometimes it was woven by the hair of animal or the hair of man. The *Divyāvadana*⁸⁴ holds that in *Uttarkuru*, there were *Kalpadusya* trees by which the variety of woolen clothes were made. Besides, there was a fine woolen cloth called *Urnadukalamayas Obhanavastrāni*, which was woven from the admixture of wool and fibers of *dukula* (a sort of bark from *Bengal*).⁸⁵ Various kinds of woolen cloth were manufactured. The coarse kind was used for herdsmen and farmers who worked hard on the fields or in the aristocratic families. The fine kind was used to stitch overcoat, shawl, and blanket for the upper class in society.

The Industries of Wood and Leather

Industries of wood and leather were developed most prosperously in the period of study. Wood has been used in large scale for the manufacture of various household objects, sculpture, construction, etc. The household things such as chairs, beds, tables, boxes, cup, bowl, etc were made of wood. Wood also played an important role in construction of palaces, temples and houses. Wood was also a main material for sculptures of *Bhārhut*, *Sanchi*, *Amaravatī*, *Nāgarjunakonda*, *Gandhara*, *Mathura*, *Ajanta*, etc.

Besides, the remains of wooden structure belonging to the time of Maurya were unearthed. This construction shows a standard architecture and decorative art in ancient India. Various kinds of wood such as rosewood, ironwood, ebony, sindora wood, sandal wood were used for the wooden industry or used to manufacture ships, coats, chariots or carts.

⁸⁴ DVD, p. 221.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

The wooden industry seemingly reached a stage of specialization during the times of Kusāna – Sātavahāna and gave birth to three specialized kinds of artisans, namely the boat manufacturers, chariot makers, and carpenters, who produced material properties for the social life and made economy to become more multiform.

The leather industry played an important part in the national economy. According to information gathered from the literature and epigraphs, the leather industry reached its summit during the time Kusānas. But the leather objects in ancient India could not be recovered at any excavation site, as leather is a perishable material, the hot and wet climate of India does not allow preservation for a long time. And it has only been found in the literary source. *Milindapanhō*⁸⁶ mentions the leather workers, leather objects, and raw material used for manufacture of leather articles.

All skins derived from various animals such as alligator, varn, leopard, lion, tiger, elephant, buffalo, cow, etc were the main source to leather industry. These skins were perhaps sought from hunters or traders. The leather articles, mentioned in the period were garments, bags, bellows, shoes, drums, arrow bags, etc. The art of tanning consisted of many stages. Firstly hide was stretched for the purpose of tanning, then the process of cutting, shaping and sewing were practised by the artisans. As a result, shoes, bags, drums, arrow bags, etc. were made from these tanned skins. These products were of high quality and were produced at a large scale. This progress also showed the important role of the leather workers, who became an important section of trading class of society. They became rich thereby they could pay taxes to the state and contributed to the rise of economy of the country. Apart from these industries, there were many other handicrafts in the period.

According to R.S. Sharma⁸⁷ the craftsmen were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of metal workers including the gold-smiths; black-smiths; jewelers; molders; solderers; turners; etc. The second group included the garland-makers, washermen, potters, bricklayers, tailors, painters, leather workers, shell-cutters, carpenters.

⁸⁶ MLP, pp. 100-2.

⁸⁷ RPSEH, p. 196.

The existence of so many crafts implied increasing specialization in the field of commodity production. The Buddhist texts refer to *Rajagrha* and *Sākala* as centres of art and craft. Most artisans known from inscriptions were found at *Mathura* region, the *Sanchi*, *Bharhut* area and the western *Deccan* where the handicrafts reached their respective summits during the times of Kusānas-Guptas, their prosperity was stimulated by the growing trade with Roma and many countries in the Asia.⁸⁸

Increased commercial activities and the consequent growth of money economy led to proliferation of arts and crafts. According to *Mahavastu*⁸⁹, a Buddhist text of about the second century A.D., more than 36 kinds of workers lived in the town of *Rajgir*. The *Milindapañhō*⁹⁰ provides a list of 75 occupations in which eight were connected to mineral products as gold, silver, lead, copper, brass, iron, and jewels. The guilds evidently utilized the capital deposited with them to augment productions and paid interest on it out of the proceed from the sale of their commodities. The possibility of increasing output may have prompted the guilds to employ hired labour, in addition to artisans, consisting of both free labour and slaves.

Artisans and craftsmen were often organized into guilds. According to D.N. Jha⁹¹, there were at least eighteen guilds in *Rajagrha*. Each guild inhabited a particular section of the town. The existence of guilds led not only to the localization of crafts and industries but also to their hereditary transmission from father to son.

In the towns, there were different divisions of specialized zones, for example, the ivory workers street, the street of traders, the street of washermen, the street of goldsmiths, the street of blacksmiths, the street of perfume makers, etc.⁹² Perhaps because of the same industrial pursuits, the town people flocked themselves in a specified street. R.S. Sharma informs that many of these artisans functioned as both producers and small traders. They could also purchase raw materials and implements

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁸⁹ MS, Vol. 3, p. 442.

⁹⁰ MLP, Vol. 2, p. 463.

⁹¹ DAI, p. 83.

⁹² KTHB, p. 7.

with money deposited with them and could pay interest on it out of the proceeds from the sale of their commodities.⁹³

In the countryside, they also tended to congregate in the same village and formed specialized organizations. Prof. Anita Sharma⁹⁴ enumerates the specialized villages during the time of Kusānas-Sātavāhanas. According to her, a village of carpenters could be seen on the border of *Kāsi* state or on the outskirts of *Varanasi*; a village of reed makers near *Sāvasthī*; a village of salt makers near *Kosambi*, etc. An inscription⁹⁵ found in central India holds that, in central and western India, the crafts of silk weavers and oil men flourished well, for they were organized in guilds. R.S. Sharma states that it is the isolation of crafts and professions and their concentration in fixed areas gave birth to the medley of castes and sub-castes, which formerly was common products of the upper classes, and they really contributed into the national economy through their specialized professions. Moreover, the localization of crafts was also due to the progressive demand of contemporary economy which led to the prosperity of the country.

Pottery

One of traditional and oldest handicrafts in India is pottery that began from pre-historical age. This craft, through a process of continuous development of techniques and arts, reached its perfection during the times of Kusāna and Gupta. Across the ages, it brought about some artistic improvements and creative qualities of fine objects that developed from outputs of the previous periods. Either it added some new features to the existing forms and design or it perfected itself in order to manufacture the more sparkling, suitable, and serviceable products.

The period from the first century B.C. to the sixth century A.D., marked a historical turning-point of development of Indian ceramic industry. Various references to the potteries, potters, wheels, and ceramic kilns, etc. are often found in the ancient Indian literature.

⁹³ RPSEH, p. 183.

⁹⁴ KTHB, p. 8.

⁹⁵ RPSEH, p. 196.

Besides, the archaeological sources also supply various evidences of potteries, the potter's guilds are found in the *Nāsik* inscription of *Madhariputra*.

Through above evidences, pottery has a ceaseless advancement in ancient India. Its result is recognized as follows:

The Black and Red Ware Potteries: This kinds of pottery was the prominent output of the *Gangā* basin. It was in vogue at many places such as in the region of central *Gangā* valley at *Patna* during 150 B.C., in *Rājputāna* at *Ahar* and in western central India in *Saurashtra* 100 B.C., at *Mahesvara* in 100 B.C. And these wares were found at *Bāhal* during the time of Sātavāhanas.⁹⁶ There were local differences of forms and designs of these wares. For example, at *Patna* the main design of it was made with thick rim⁹⁷ while at *Udaipur* and *Ahar* the main type of it was made with incurved or straight sides. Differences in decoration, painting, and surface treatment are found on these wares. Though there were above difference of forms and designs, all of black and red wares were made by clay that was generally mixed with materials as fine sand, hay and possibly ash too. And they were also the same in the firing techniques and were shaped by the combination of hands and wheel technique. It is interesting to say that the potters of the period were experienced in decoration and firing technique. They used either double firing technique that could make the pots to become red or black and then making them red or black at the edges by the application of charcoal or inverted firing technique. The symbolical specimens of this ware pottery are the rimless bowls, globular pots with sloping shoulders, basins and dishes on stands.⁹⁸

The Megalithic Black and Red Ware Potteries: This kind of pottery had a hey-day in south India during the times of Sakas – Kusānas – Sātavahānas. The places that are known as home of this ware are *Brahamagiri* (200 B.C. – 50 A.D.), *Arikāmedu*, *Chandravalli* and *Sisupālgarh* (200 B.C. – 300 A.D.).⁹⁹

⁹⁶ SEHS, p. 147.

⁹⁷ SPAI, p. 30.

⁹⁸ RMS, p. 103.

⁹⁹ SEHS, pp. 109-11.

The Megallic black and red ware pottery is known as the contemporary type with the black and red ware of *Gangā* basin. The common feature of south black and red ware pottery is its crackled surface unlike the North one. This ware was fine for it had an uniform thin side and was polished with a slip. Though it has a thin and beautiful side, it is easy broken because it has not fired with a high temperature. This ware is said to be made by the levigated clay and was salt glazed and the process of inverted firing technique.¹⁰⁰

The Red Ware Potteries: The ware existed during the times of Sakas and Sātavahānas. The archaeological evidences¹⁰¹ affirm its places such as at *Rupar* (c. 200 B.C. – 600 A.D.), *Nastīnāpur* (c. 200 B.C. – 400 A.D.) and *Patna* (c. 200 B.C. – 400 A.D.). Apart from these, the ware is also found at other places such as *Taxila*, *Puskalavatī*, *Kuruksheta*, *Purana*, *Hastināpur*, *Mathura*, *Srāvasti*, *Vaisali*, etc.¹⁰² The red wares were also discovered in South India, at *Arikāmedu* (c. 200 – 100 B.C.) and *Sisupālgarh* (c. 100 – 200 A.D.).¹⁰³

The south wares were not made by the fully levigated clay and were fired at a medium temperature. Their structural sphere was from coarse to fine. Whereas, the North wares have a very thick texture, and were fired in a high temperature for they give ringing sounds when knocked on surface. The ware belonging to this kind are dishes, lids, basins, large water pots, strap-handles vases, narrow necked flasks, etc.

The Black Ware Potteries: This kind has fine surface and polished with black colour and it can be compared with the Northern black polished wares. It belonged to the times of Saka and Kusāna (200 B.C. – 300 A.D.). It was in vogue in South India and other places. The ware appeared at *Brahamāpuri* along with other prominent red wares (c. 200 B.C. – 300 A.D.) and red polished wares (c. 100 B.C. – 300 A.D.).¹⁰⁴ Though the clay used for this ware was not levigated, the firing was made in high temperature for it gives ringing sounds when knocked on its surface. Main shapes of this ware are

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 140-1.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ AED, p. 67.

square rims, cooking pots with narrow neck, ledged shoulders and lids with knobs.¹⁰⁵ These wares were decorated with incised or impressed designs such as oblique lines between group of double lines and wavy lines, a row of pricked depressions and circles above the narrow portions.

The Painted Gray Ware Potteries: This kind was in vogue during the time of pre-Kusāna and was discovered from the sites in *Yamuna* basin and *Rājputāna*.¹⁰⁶ The ware was not made by good clay and was ill fired. Depending on the findings of this type, people can guess that the ware could not be made in the time of Kusāna and was not popular in the time of post Kusāna periods.

The Gray Ware Potteries: Seemingly, it appeared from the second century B.C. to the third century A.D. It was found at *Ahichchhatra* (c. 200 B.C. – c. 300 A.D.), *Kosambi* (c. 200 B.C. – c. 100 A.D.), *Bairat* (c. 100 – 300 A.D.) and *Arikāmedu* (c. 200 – 100 B.C.).¹⁰⁷ This ware was seemingly not made by good clay and was fired well. There was the difference of fabric according to local products. For example, at *Ahichchhatra* it is thin to medium while at other places, it is generally coarse; the duration is similar to the red ware of *Gangā* valley.

The Northern Black Polished Ware Potteries (NBPW): According to Prof. K.T.S. Sarao, the NBPW appeared between c. 500 - 200 B.C. at *Gangā* basin.¹⁰⁸ Besides, there were other centres of this kind found at *Taxila* (c. 200 B.C. – c. 300 A.D.), *Rajghat*, *Pupar*, *Sārnāth*, *Basrāha*, *Kosambi* and *Kāsi* (c. 200 – 100 B.C.).¹⁰⁹ Though NBPW appeared at *Gangā* basin, its shreds have been found in North-western *Punjab* and southern sites of India. It means that NBPW was an item of goods and was imported to these sites from *Gangā* basin. NBPW was made by the levigated clay and was fired with the high temperature. The fabric varies from thin to thick and the main types consisted of small vessels, bowls, dishes, and jugs. NBPW was unique ware for it has the special polish and was called 'Delux ware' and it also had the highest

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ SEHS, p. 67.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

¹⁰⁸ KONB, p. 60.

¹⁰⁹ MT, Vol. 1, pp. 116-59.

position comparing to other wares in the society. Its use was fit for the aristocrats and members of rich and royal families.

Āndhra Ware Potteries: This kind seemly appeared at *Andhra Pradesh* in the first century A.D. during the rule of Sātavāhana.¹¹⁰ Its shreds have been found at several sites in *Andhra Pradesh* including *Brahmāgirī* and *Chandrāvalli*.¹¹¹ It was made by good clay and was fired with a high temperature; especially it was painted by kaolin on surface. The main type of this ware is bowls with various rims such as the beaked bowls, the rounded bowls, the leveled bowls or the featureless ones. Apart from that, there are high necked convex bowls with narrow mouth, globular pots, flat and shallow dishes with slightly incurved or vertical sides. The *Andhra* ware has high technique of firing that has shining and glazing surface like glass and has been painted by kaolin.

Amphorae and Other Imported Wares: The excavation at *Arikāmedu* and other places in India demonstrated that ancient Indian trade development, which extensively contacted with the countries in the West during the beginning of the Christian era, had been really appeared. The foreign wares were brought into India including arretine ware, reuletted ware, red polished ware, and amphorae; among these wares, amphorae was considered as the most symbolical product. Amphorae came from Roma and other countries of Mediterranean; it was a high two handled pot with a narrow neck, a jar standard for transport of oil and wine.¹¹² The shreds of amphorae have been found at *Arikāmedu*, *Nevāsa*, *Ujjan*, *Ter*, *Junnar*, *Dwārika*, *Devnimore*, and *Taxila*. The *Taxila* amphorae had certainly traveled by the land route, while south amphorae came from sea route with Roma traders. Through the shreds of amphorae found at various places, people can believe that ancient India imported wine from Roma or other countries of Mediterranean.

Generally, the Indian pottery in the period was seemingly influenced by foreign pottery that manifested itself on progressive technique and decoration thereby some

¹¹⁰ KTHB, p. 87.

¹¹¹ SEHS, p. 166.

¹¹² DAI, p. 82.

significant changes in technology, in fabrics, in shapes, and in decorative designs could be noticed.

The potters of *Gangā* valley were influenced by the Scytho-Pārthian pottery that presented the fine products with the red and grey slip, fine fabrics and high firing technique. Moreover, the Greeks also introduced their art of impressing designs on the wet clay with the help of moulds and stamps on subsequently that was adopted by the Indian potters. The methods of rouleting, stamping, moulding and decorating were introduced by Indo-Roma potters.

It is interesting to say that the Indian potters in the period had a spirit of self mastery in their occupation without the complete dependence on foreigners or foreign wares. They continued to develop their ceramic wares that present certain evolutions in techniques and decorations. Most of the historians such as M.N. Pandey, S.P. Gupta, S.R. Rao, etc. had discussions on the pottery of the period and decidedly accepted that the pottery of the period as an indigenous ware that was made under the influence of foreign wares.¹¹³

(3) Trade and Commerce

During the times of Sakas and Kusānas, Indian economy developed significantly with agricultural profuse products and the greater specialization of industries that contributed to the advancement of trade and commerce. The trade routes were established, some market towns grew up along the trade routes and ports, they served as linking points between cities and countrysides. Trade and commerce in the period consisted of the internal and foreign trades.

Internal Trade

The internal trade was not new during the periods of Kusāna and Sātavāhana; it could be traced back to third millennium B.C., starting from Indus valley, as provided by archaeological and literary sources.¹¹⁴ The Greek source speaks of considerable

¹¹³ SPAI, pp. 283-4.

¹¹⁴ MAIU, p. 611.

improvement in communications brought about by the Mauryas.¹¹⁵ The rivers and sports also formed the nucleus of the trade.

In the beginning the major part of the internal trade seemingly was carried out by land routes and they also used sea routes. The trade through land routes was important in itself and also served as a feeder to the sea trade. The well known sea ports like *Bharukaccha* and *Sovira* on the west, *Kāvīrapattana*, *Karambiya*, *Gambhīra* and *Serivan* on the south and east served external trade very well.¹¹⁶ All agricultural and industrial products were circulated from one place to another. There are archaeological evidences supporting internal trade in the country. For example, a couple of shreds of the red polished ware, typical of western India and also of Kusānas, had been found in the layers belonging to the 1st-3rd centuries A.D. at *Satanikot* in *Kurnool* district, which might indicate trade between *Andhra* and north India. Red polished wares found at several Sātavāhana sites suggest local trade but it may have been sent to north India.¹¹⁷ There are several evidences of long distance trade in glass objects and semi-precious stone heads from south to north India. There are also clear evidences of trade contact between *Mathurā* and *Gandhara*. The *Mathurā* image of a goddess was made of blue schist of *Gandhara* and shows the style of the Graeco Buddhist shawl. The Jatakas¹¹⁸, Buddhist birth stories, make numerous references to caravans with 500 or 100 carts going from place to other places. Merchants such as horse-dealers from *Uttarapatha* are described as moving from one place to other places to sell their goods.¹¹⁹

The special feature of the period was a barter system that prevailed in internal trade through land and sea routes, goods were circulated from one place to another without dependence on the political system.

Foreign Trade

It is said that, during the time of Mauryas, commercial activities were mainly confined to internal and external trade with some neighbourly countries like Srilanka,

¹¹⁵ DAI, p. 60.

¹¹⁶ KTHB, p. 5.

¹¹⁷ RPSEH, p. 183.

¹¹⁸ DAI, p. 29.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Burma, Myanma, etc. The commercial and trading relations between India and the foreign countries were made during the times of Sakas-Sātavāhanas. V.S. Mohan¹²⁰ affirms that the trade between India and western world particularly flourished during the period of the later Sakas and Kusānas. It is said that an important factor that helped growth of international trade was the movement of Alexander's army from mainland Greece to India. It opened up a number of trade routes and revealed the possibilities of mercantile relations between north west India and western Asia.¹²¹ Moreover, the thriving trade between India and Roma empire was carried out during the reign of Kusānas.¹²² To stimulate foreign trade Kusānas accepted the Roma gold coins as their currency. At that time the Roma coinage served as an international currency. According to D.N. Jha¹²³, there are at least sixty eight hoards of Roma coins discovered in India, no less than fifty seven hoards come from south of the *Vindhyas*. On the other hand, Roma ships as well as the ships of Asian countries could enter the famous ports such as *Bharucch*, *Kalya*, *Sopal*, etc to sell their goods.

The Sātavāhana rulers developed both landed and maritime trades. The figure of a ship found on Sātavāhana coins clearly testify to the fact of their maritime activities.¹²⁴ Further the discovery of a large number of Roma coins in the *Krishna* river valley strengthens the above fact. Procopious¹²⁵ explains that silk and spices were chief Indian export articles of Indo-Roma trade. But by the middle of the sixth century A.D., Chinese silk worms were secretly brought over and introduced into the *Byzantine* empire. This produced an adverse effect on Indian trade with the West. Later, the expansion of the Arabs under the banner of Islam might have further disrupted India's trade. Commercial decline is indicated by paucity of coins of common use. Though the Guptas issued large number of gold coins but these hardly flowed into day to day private economic relation. Copper and silver coins in the period were scant. The gold coins issued by Guptas could be useful for big transactions like the sale and purchase of land or house or cattle.

¹²⁰ MILC, p. 144.

¹²¹ DAI, p. 29.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ RPHEI, p. 196.

Apart from that, cowries became the common medium of exchange.¹²⁶ The weakening of the commercial links with the Western world perhaps stopped the movement of artisans and traders from one part of the country to an other.

In short, the internal and foreign trade was prosperous during the period of later Sakas, Kusānas and Sātavāhanas and declined during the post Gupta period.

Export and Import

D.N. Jha¹²⁷ states that emergence of the Roma empire as the paramount power in the Western world gave a fillip to Indian trade from the first century A.D. onwards. According to him, the eastern part of the Roma empire became the chief customer of Indian luxury goods.

The Periplus of the Erythraean sea written by an anonymous Greek navigator gives details of Indian exports to Roma empire.¹²⁸ The main Indian exports were pepper, pearl, ivory, silk, spike-nard, diamond, sapphire, lapis lazuli, iron, steel, copper, turquoise, saffron, cotton cloth, perfume, medicinal herbs, pigment, silk-yarn, muslin, indigo, porcelain, tortoise-shell and animal skin.

D.N. Jha states that, Roma women not only wore Indian pearls on their fingers and ears but also put them on the shoes.¹²⁹ Muslin from India was highly valued in Roma empire, East Africa, Arabia and Egypt.¹³⁰

Apart from that, the leaf of *Tamala* tree from *Mathurā* was one of the best spices.¹³¹ Rough kind of animal skin and heavy woolen coats from north-west India were also the expensive objects in demand in East Africa.¹³²

Indian principal imports from Roma were linen, glass vessel, tin, lead, coral, topaz, gauze, storax, sweet clover, antimony, medicinal ointment, etc. and, especially,

¹²⁶ DAI, p. 102.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹²⁸ PES, p. 46.

¹²⁹ DAI, p. 81.

¹³⁰ PES, pp. 72-3.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

golden and silver coins.¹³³ India also imported from Roma wine amphorae, the samian ware, the roulette ware and red glazed argentine ware, which have been discovered at *Arikamedu* in south India and some other places.¹³⁴ The technique of these foreign potteries influenced the local potteries of India.

The commercial relation between Roma and India were close. Pliny¹³⁵ tells that Roma trade with India involved colossal sums. He laments that: "India, China and Arabia absorbed between them 550 million sesterces (Roma money) per year, nearly half of this amount came to India".

The complaint may be an exaggeration but it can not be dismissed, for Roma had to ban trade in silk, cutlery and other luxury goods which were imported by Roma from the East.

Indian goods were exported to the south areas of Arabia where boasted of agricultural wealth due to careful irrigation as well as gaining an income from trade. The main merchandises, which were exported to Arabia, were copper, sandal wood, teak and ebony, frankincense, muslin, silk-yarn and indigo, etc. And India imported from these areas including pearl, dye, wine, glass, gold plate, date, gold, etc.¹³⁶

India also imported from Eastern Mediteranean wine, antimony, amphorae, etc. Through shreds of wine amphorae found at various places in south India shows a large scale of trade. Eastern Mediteranean imported from India the black pepper, silk-yarns, woolen coats, etc.¹³⁷

India also contacted with South east Asia like China, Indonexia, Vietnam, Java, etc and traded at ports such as *Ban Chiang*, *Tonkin*, *Canton* (south China), *Oc eo* (modern south of Vietnam) and areas between India and China near Gulf of Sian, *Suvarnadvipa* (Golden isles), Java, Sumatra and Bali, etc. Chinese traders brought into India the fur and horses. The horse trade was also of interests to

¹³³ RPHEI, p. 240.

¹³⁴ DAI, p. 82.

¹³⁵ RPHEI, pp. 242-3.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

Indian traders. The discovery of Indian relics such as an ivory comb, carnelian stone rings and a seal with *Brahmin* letter at *Tonkin* and *Ban Chiang* (China)¹³⁸ further strengthens the view that trade relations existed between India & China during the period under study. Especially a wooden statue of male *Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva* found at Oc eo, which is preserved at the museum of *Kien Giang* province (south Vietnam), all suggest that the presence of Indian merchants in South eastern Asia from the beginning of Christian era onwards. And India also exported to South eastern Asia the wooden statues of the Buddha and *Bodhisattvas*, sandal wood, teak and ebony, ivory, etc.¹³⁹

The Indian internal and foreign trades had been most prosperous during the times from Sakas to Sātavāhanas. And especially during the time of Gupta, Indian trade reached its peak. The Indian commodities such as spices, sandal wood, precious stones and luxury goods were exported to Western world, Western Asia, Central Asia and South east Asia. And brought back a large number of important goods; especially the potteries that influenced local potteries generation after generation. On the other hand, Indian traders, during the period of study, brought back the colossal sums of gold and silver coins from Roma.

(4) The Trade Routes and Introduction of Buddhism into Asiatic Countries

The ancient network of trade routes consisted of both internal and international routes. The internal routes are said to be firstly established by Mauryas. They had an improved internal communications. This improvement was attributed to the construction of royal highway from *Pataliputra* to *Taxila*.¹⁴⁰ *Pataliputra* was connected by road to *Tamralipti* (*Tamalux*) in the *Gangā* delta, the chief port for ships sailing to Ceylon and Burma. The *Theravāda* Buddhism was introduced in Ceylon in the time of Asoka by Mahinda and Saṃghamittā through this route¹⁴¹ and from Ceylon the religion reached Burma, Thailand and Indonesia during the later centuries.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ RPHEI, p. 237.

¹⁴¹ KBC, p. 17.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

Romila Thapar¹⁴³ states that routes to the south developed rapidly in post Maurya times due to intensified trade demands. Land routes followed river valleys where possible, the elevations in the *Deccan* plateau discouraging direct north-south communication, but there were some East-west routes along valleys such as those of the *Godavari* and *Krishna* rivers passed through these routes were more safer.¹⁴⁴ However, the *Deccan* was a hive of market centres, production centres and Buddhist monasteries at places such as *Ter*, *Bhokardan*, *Karad*, *Kondapur*, *Dharanikota* and *Amaravati*. *Ujjain* was linked via *Bhokardan*, *Kotalingala*, *Dhulikatta* and *Peddabunkur* to *Amaravati*.

Another route linked *Bhrigukachchha*, *Nasik*, *Kondapur*, *Nāgarjunakonda* and *Amaravati*.¹⁴⁵ There were many Buddhist monasteries, *stūpas* along this route.

Kautilya says that, in the south, routes running through the mining areas were necessary as these traversed the heavily populated regions and were therefore safer than the more isolated routes. Mining activities at that place might have expanded, especially the mining of gold and semi precious stones.¹⁴⁶

Apart from these, coastal routes developed faster and became the basis of North-south links along each coast, sometimes preferred over land routes. It is said that the cargo from Roma ships was offloaded at the western ports to be transported overland to the east coast, where places such as *Arikamedu* became trading station. Incoming cargo was received for further distribution and exports were specially packed for transmission to Red sea ports.

The international routes served as links to the ports and trading centres. The Northern routes went to *Gandhara* and *Kasmir* in North West India.¹⁴⁷ *Gandhara* and *Kasmir* are said to be the cradles of the Sārvastivāda Buddhism that was introduced there from the time of Asoka.¹⁴⁸ Crossing the border of *Gandhara* in North west India was the Greek state of *Bactria*, founded by Ionian Greeks, who had settled there after

¹⁴³ RPHEI, p. 236.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

¹⁴⁷ KBC, p. 17.

¹⁴⁸ SST, p. 4.

Alexander's campaign. Kenneth K.S. Chen¹⁴⁹ holds that Buddhism had already been introduced into *Bactria* in the second century B.C. and had gained a foothold there. From *Bactria* the route continued via the *Oxus* region, the *Caspian* sea and the *Caucasus* to the Black sea.

Routes within India were actively used and this activity increased through contacts with more distant places in west and central Asia that were linked to the Hellenistic world.¹⁵⁰ Buddhism might have followed these routes to enter West and Central Asia.¹⁵¹ Prof. Anita Sharma¹⁵² states that the route was via *Varanasi* well-known for cotton and silk drapery, which was also a meeting point of trade routes including land route and sea route. In the north-westwards, from *Taxila* to *Begram*, where roads branched off in various directions. A route went from *Kandahar* and *Herat* to *Ecbatana*, after which it was linked to the ports on the Eastern Mediterranean. Another highway also ran from *Kandahar* to *Persepolis* and *Susa* in *Persia*. Ships traveling from the western ports followed the coastal route to *Aden* or *Socatra*, from where the ships could be undertaken to the Red sea.¹⁵³ From somewhere near the modern *Suez*, goods could be sent overland to Alexandria, an important trading centre of the Mediterranean world.¹⁵⁴ A land mark in the development of communication was the discovery of the monsoon winds by the Greek sailor Hippalus in around A.D. 46-47.¹⁵⁵ But it is now being suggested that Hippalus was actually the name given to the wind. The discovery of monsoon wind made the mid ocean navigation via the Arabian sea possible, reducing the distance between India and the west Asia ports.

Besides, there was another route that linked India with China called silk route. The route started from *Taxila* to *Bamiyan* in Afghanistan then crossed *Hindukush* mountain to *Balkh*. From *Balkh* crossed the *Parmir* to *Kashgar*. This stopping place with its numerous Buddhist monasteries provided a welcome stoppage for tired

¹⁴⁹ KBC, p. 17.

¹⁵⁰ RPHEI, p. 237.

¹⁵¹ KBC, p. 17.

¹⁵² KONB, p. 6.

¹⁵³ RPHEI, p. 238.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ RPSEH, p. 184.

travelers. After leaving *Kashgar*, travelers either followed the north route which followed the northern fringe of the *Taklamakan* desert or followed the south route which skirted the southern fringe. If they followed the southern route, they must pass through a series of oasis centres and came to *Khotan*.¹⁵⁶ If they followed the northern route, they were via *Kucha*, *Karashar* and *Tunfan*. These two routes then converged in *Tun Huang* on the Chinese north-west frontier. *Tun Huang* was an important Buddhist centre in China. Through the silk route, Buddhism was introduced to China in the first century A.D. under the reign of Ming Ti of Han dynasty.¹⁵⁷ The first Buddhist missionary, under the leadership of Ven Matanga and Chu Fa lan, brought the *Sūtra in Forty Two Sections* to China in the year A.D. 65 and the *sūtra* was translated into Chinese at the white Horse temple in loyang.¹⁵⁸

Besides the silk route, there were two other land routes but these were not used by monks. One was by way of *Assam* through upper Burma to *Yunnan* in south west China. The other passed through Nepal and Tibet. For a brief period during the *T'ang* dynasty, this route was used by Chinese monks journeying to India.¹⁵⁹ It was also possible to go from India to China by the sea route. The main ports of *Debarkation* on the Bay of *Bengal* were *Kaveripattanam* at the mouth of the *Cauvery* river and *Tamralipti* at the mouth of *Ganges*. At times ships sailed for China from *Bharukaccha* (modern Broach) on the west coast of India. After leaving these ports, the ships could sail directly to Java or follow the coast line around the Malay Peninsula until they reached *Ton Kin* or *Canton* in south China.¹⁶⁰ The commercial travelers exchanged goods from India to China by this route and through this route *Bodhidharma*, the twenty-eighth patriarch of Indian Meditation school, came to China in the year A.D. 520.¹⁶¹ I-Tsing, the Chinese pilgrim, who came to India in the year A.D. 671-695 by the sea route.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ RPHEI, p. 240.

¹⁵⁷ DCCAI, p. 97.

¹⁵⁸ KBC, pp. 34-5.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

Through the trade routes, *Mahāyāna* Buddhism was propagated in Western Asia, Central and South East Asia and making its active contribution to religious, cultural and artistic life of the people in these countries through the ages.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM

The earliest religion in India was the Vedic religion that took shape and crystallized over an extremely long period of time and particular stages of that process are reflected in various *Vedic* writings. *Vedic* religion can be regarded as well-defined system, a whole complex of religious beliefs together with corresponding rites and ceremonies. It also reflected the development of *Vedic* society itself in the period when the first Indian states were taking shape.

Mahāyāna Buddhism emerged in the most developmental stage of the Vedic religion and both were developing abreast without exclusion.

(1) Development of Brahmanism in Indian countries

All scholars agree that firstly *Vedic Aryan* conquered the aborigines of *Punjab* and settled on the banks of the *Indus* and its tributaries. In recent years the interesting archeological findings have brought to light the concrete evidence on the *Indo Aryan* of the *Vedic* age.

K. Antonova¹ affirms that *Vedic Aryan* extended throughout *Punjab*, in the upper reaches of the *Yamuna* and *Ganges* and the valleys of these rivers. R.C. Dutt² also holds that before the rise of *Magadha*, *Brahmin* was only a number of colonist tribes on the *Ganges* but after the rise of *Magadha* that brought all Northern India to the rule of a nation and *Brahmanism* was spread the whole north India.

D.N. Jha³ gives a more detail report that after the spread of *Brahmanism* to *Magadha*, its surrounding areas such as *Anga*, *Vanga*, *Berares*, *Kosala* accepted this religion. And in subsequent centuries, *Brahmanism* spread to *Bengal*, *Orissa*, *Assam* and other provinces of western India. These places received the first rays of *Vedic* civilization. According to R.C. Dutt⁴, by the end of the fourth century B.C., *Bengal*,

¹ KHI, p. 32.

² RAI, pp. 138-9.

³ DAI, p. 65.

⁴ RAI, p. 139.

Orissa and the whole western India belonged to *Vaisnavism* and *Shaivism* (two branches of *Brahmanism*). *Gujarat* was early colonized by *Vaisnavism* and it would appear from the legends of *Krishna* in the *Mahābharata* that the country was colonized from the banks of the *Jumna* by some the races, who had fought in the great war and by the fourth century B.C., the *Surashtra* of *Gujarat* had been powerful nation of *Brahmanism*.⁵ *Malwa* too was early assimilated by *Brahmanism* and the kings of *Ujjain* were reckoned among the civilized *Brahmin* powers after the fourth century B.C.⁶

The waves of *Brahmanism* continued to roll further and the *Vindhya* mountain was crossed. In *Andhra*, a great and powerful kingdom of *Brahmin* was founded in the country between the *Narbada* and the *Krishna* rivers and capital of this southern empire was near modern *Amarāvati*.⁷

And the country beyond the *Krishna* river received the *Aryan* civilization and religion. Three kingdoms (the *Chalas*, the *Cheras* and the *Pandyas*) had arisen in the extreme southern part of India also followed *Brahmanism*.⁸

R.C. Dutt holds that wherever *Aryan* came, they introduced cultivation, manufactures and arts. They spread the *Sanskrit* language, *Vedic* religion and rites. And they founded the school of law, religion and learning. Upto the third century B.C., the *Vaisnavism* and *Shaivism* developed in the whole country. Though R.C. Dutt⁹ holds that these new religions aimed at the image worship, rites and ceremonies but the image worship, in fact, started from the first century B.C. and it was certainly influenced by *Mahāyāna* Buddhism.¹⁰

Vedic Brahmanism

An important element of the *Vedic* religion is polytheism. According to K. Antonova¹¹, *Vedic Brahmanism* had no image worship and its gods and goddess are

⁵ DAI, p. 65.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ RAI, pp. 69-72.

¹⁰ JBC, p. 348, RPHEI, p. 147.

¹¹ KHI, p. 47.

related to the phenomena of nature. In *Rig Veda*, the classification of gods was made according to heaven, earth, and space. The heaven gods include Sūrya (the sun god), Usha (the goddess of dawn) and Varuna (the upholder of moral order). The earth gods were Agni (the god of fire) and Soma (the god of the holy intoxicating drink). The gods of space were Rudra (the god of storm), Vayu (the god of wind) and the mighty Indra (the god of thunderbolt). Brahman, Visnu, and Siva (Rudra) were the most important gods, who became trinity of Hinduism later. And many hymns and the sacrifices were offered to these gods.

The *Vedic* people believed that by performing sacrifices, gods would send them more cattle, victory in battle, good harvest or to free them from disaster and ruin. Apart from benevolent gods, *Vedic* people believed in existence of evil spirits and demons such as *Rakshases* and *Asūras*.

In the later *Vedic* age, there emerged a group of abstract divinities whose functions were vague and they were not connected with the tripartite model of the world like the previous *Vedic* faith.

K. Antonova¹² maintains that a characteristic feature of the *Vedic* beliefs was the absence of any clear individualization of gods or clear distribution of their functions.

The Works of Brahmanism

The important works of *Brahmanism* are four *Vedas*, *Brahmanas*, *Aranyaka*, Epic literature and *Upaniṣads*. Four *Vedas* are *Rig Veda* (the collection of hymn or *samhitas*), *Soma Veda* (a collection of *chants*), the *Yajur Veda* (a collection of incantations and formulas for magic).

In *Rig Veda*¹³, many of hymns describe nature and human motions in such poetic form and such rich imagery that they can be regarded as models of poetry. The gods in *Vedic* literature were represented as the phenomena of nature and many hymns address to them. The authors of *Vedas* described their own experiences and feelings,

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

telling of their joys and sorrow. Some scholars rightly regard *Rig Veda* as the initial source for the heroic Epos that is a salient feature of the Epic literature.¹⁴

S. Radhakrishnan¹⁵ affirms that four *Vedas* themselves were arranged and systematized during the period of the *Aryan* expansion in the *Ganges* valley.

Brahmanas is the second important work of *Brahmanism*. The work talks of sacrificial rites. God, Prajapaty, who was the god of creatures in the *Vedas*, was represented as the god of sacrifice in the *Brahmanas*. The work says that those, who perform sacrifice, will attain immeasurable virtue.¹⁶ As a result, the rites of sacrifice gradually became more and more intricate and led to the emergence of several groups of priests, who conducted various types of religious and ritualistic ceremonies. According to *Brahmanas*, sacrifice and incantation made possible not only for gods but also for man to attain immortality. And gods pleased with sacrifices bring to man wealth, descendents and happiness.¹⁷ This concept is not different from that of *Vedas* in the previous time. In the *Brahmanas*, the legends and tales such as the Indian version of the flood legend together with prosaic interpretations of religious rituals were also mentioned.

Epic literature, according to S. Radhakrishnan¹⁸, consists of two main works, i.e., the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*, mostly occurred in the *Vedic* period when the early *Aryans* from *Punjab* to the *Ganges* valley and settled down in the *Kurus* round Delhi, the *Pañcālas* near *Kanous*, the *Kosala* near *Oudh* and the *Kāsis* near *Benares*. The *Mahābhārata* was, perhaps, composed in the same period that the great war between the *Kurus* and the *pāṇḍavas* appeared. S. Radhakrishnan¹⁹ maintains that the *Mahābhārata* represents a period when the *Vedic* hymns had lost their original force and meaning. And a ceremonial religion was appealed to the people, simultaneously the distinction of caste grew into prominence. The *Rāmāyana*, a second important work of

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹⁵ RIP₁, p. 271.

¹⁶ KHI, p. 52.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹⁸ RIP₁, p. 271.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

Epic literature, deals with wars of the *Aryan* with the natives of India, who adopted the *Aryan* civilization later on.

In the Epic literature, Viṣṇu is associated with Indra and is vested with rare powers. He was considered as the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world. It is interesting to say that three functions of creation, preservation, and destruction of the world attributed to Brahman, Viṣṇu and Siva in the *Upaniṣads*, but in Epic literature these functions were attributed to Viṣṇu alone. The figure of Krishna was considered as the incarnation of Viṣṇu. Krishna was portrayed not only as the leader of a tribe of the *pāṇḍāvas* but also as a Supreme being and finally as a God who was the creator of the world.²⁰

Upaniṣads are considered as the *Vedānta* or the end of the *Vedas*. They consist of a group of texts that interpret the *Vedic* myths and rites. In the fields of philosophy, the *Upaniṣads* recognize two kinds of truth, the conventional and absolute truths. The absolute truth stands for *Brahman* or *Ātman* that exists in the variety of existence.

The conventional truth is about all external objects including man's body and soul. In the *Rig Veda*, *Ātman* is understood as the breath or the vital essence, gradually it is developed into the essence of soul. In *Rig Veda*, *Brahman* is considered as the god of creatures, but in the *Upaniṣads*, *Brahman* is considered as the ground of all existences. Specially *Brahman* is identified with *Ātman* in the *Upaniṣads*: "*Ātman* is *Brahman* and *Brahman* is *Ātman*".²¹ The identification of *Ātman* (the inner ego of each being) with the *Brahman* (the impersonal all embracing divine essence of the entire world) is the special feature of the *Upaniṣads*.

Apart from these, *Upaniṣads* consider the creator of the world (*Isvara*) as the cosmic *Brahman*, who is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. *Svetasvatara Upaniṣad* identifies *Isvara* with *Rudra* or *Siva*. In the *Rigveda* *Rudra* was considered as the god of storms and lightning whereas He is the creator of the world by his *māyā* in the *Upaniṣads*.²²

²⁰ KHI, p. 50.

²¹ RPU, p. 603.

²² SIP₁, p. 17.

According to the *Upaniṣads*, the world is real though it has its imperfect manifestations. *Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*²³ says that all creatures come from *Brahman* as sparks that come from fire, as plants shoot forth on the earth and as the threads come out from a spider. The bondage and the liberation of man's soul, and the means to the liberation are mentioned in details, in the *Upaniṣads*. The so-called doctrine of *karma* which is later to permeate not only orthodox doctrines but also such religious teachings like Jainism and Buddhism.²⁴

It is clear that the *Upaniṣads* reveal marked differences with *Vedic* teachings precisely because their authors found the *Vedic* teachings insufficiently profound in the religious sense and practice.

Main Sects of Brahmanism

From the time of Maurya to Gupta age, the orthodox *Brahmanism* was to be divided into two main sects. One was *Vaiṣṇavism* that worshipped Viṣṇu and second was *Śhaivism* that worshipped Siva. D.N. Jha²⁵ holds that *Śhaivism* and *Vaiṣṇavism* emerged as early as the Maurya period but *Vaiṣṇavism* only became widespread during the Gupta age.

Vaiṣṇavism

Through data that are gleaned from literary sources and material found in epigraphic documents, *Vaiṣṇavism* worshipped Viṣṇu and his incarnations like Vasudeva, Krishna, etc. K. Antonova²⁶ holds that in the grammar book composed by Pāṇini (fifth or fourth century B.C.) reference is made to the worship of Vasudeva, who was traditionally held to have been a heroic *Kṣatriya*. Patanjali (C2 B.C.) also mentioned the worship of *Vasudeva* in his book and in the *Bhagavadgīta* *Vasudeva* appears as one of the manifestations of the Supreme god *Bhagavata*. The Megasthenes's records testify to *Vasudeva* worship in the early Maurya period. Apart from that, the

²³ RPU, p. 190.

²⁴ RIP₁, p. 271.

²⁵ DAI, p. 108.

²⁶ KHI, p. 145.

worship of *Vasudeva*, according to Indian sources, was particularly popular in *Mathura*. The Greek writer also depicted that in the period of early *Vaisnavism*, *Vasudeva* was already deified but had not yet equated with the figure of *Krishna*.

In the famous *Heliodorus* inscription²⁷ at *Besnagar* (C2 B.C.) *Vasudeva* was revered as god of gods and according to this inscription the worship of *Vasudeva* was widespread not merely among Indians but also among the Greeks inhabiting north west India.

In the early centuries A.D., many temples were erected for the *Vaisnavite* deities (*Viṣṇu*), *Vasudeva* and *Shankershana*. This is a characteristic feature of medieval *Brahmanism*.

The main divinity of *Vaisnavism* is *Viṣṇu*, who appears in the early text namely *Narayane* as a god worshipped by the native tribes of northern India. In the *Brahmanas* (book) he is revered as the mighty God sometimes he is placed higher than *Vedic* god *Prajapati*, the god of all creatures. The worship of *Viṣṇu* was incorporated with god *Krishna*, who was soon to become one of the most popular gods in the *Upaniṣads*.

Vaisnavism attached special importance to incarnation of *Viṣṇu*. The earlier literature mentions four incarnations of *Viṣṇu* but in later accounts there are twenty nine.²⁸ Even the Buddha is considered as the ninth incarnation of *Viṣṇu*.²⁹ This element led to the incorporation of diverse cults into *Vaisnavism* and the followers of *Viṣṇu* referred to him not only as the custodian of the universe but also as its creator and destroyer. And goddess *laxmi*, a spouse of *Viṣṇu*, is worshipped by this sect.

Shaivism

Side by side with *Vaisnavism*, *Shaivism* and *Saktism* also gained great popularity in the period. K. Antonova³⁰ affirms that *Siva* had gone down in *Brahmanic* literature as *Rudra*, a god of thunder-storms and hurricanes. The equation of *Siva* and *Rudra*, it

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ JBC, p. 6.

³⁰ KHI, p. 146.

seems, took place at a very late stage. In fact, it was only a question of the incorporation of a local deity into *Brahmanism* and the cult of Siva was to coincide with the religious beliefs of the people of Southern India. According to K. Antonova³¹, Siva, the god of asceticism and animal sacrifice, is also the protector of man in his ordinary life.

Evidence of the spread of *Shaivism* during the Maurya and Shunga ages is to be gleaned from the writings of Pānini, Patanjali, and Megasthenes. In the grammar book, Pānini writes about the followers of Siva and Patanjali refers to idols erected in his honour. In Megasthenes' writing, Siva is described as a god popular among mountain-dwellers who arrange special ceremonies involving the beating of drums and sacrifices. Two His devoted sons are Ganesha and Skanda, who always appear as independent gods in their own rights. And Uṃa or Parvati or Kali, the wife of Siva, is also worshipped as a goddess.

(2) Hinduism

R.C. Dutt³² holds that the growing popularity of Buddhism, Jainism and other heterodox sects led to positions against the *Vedic* sacrifices involving animal slaughter. The heretical attacked on *Vedic* institutions and animal sacrifice seriously; it was this attack undermined the prestige and authority of *Brahmin*. *Brahmanism* therefore underwent some important changes. *Hinduism*, a variant of *Brahmanism*, emerged in the time of Guptas.³³ This variant looked different in outward forms but the faith and observance were not different from their ancestors.

Hinduism is only an incorporation of *Vaisnavism*, *Shaivism*, *Saktism* and various local beliefs and ceremonies of worship. The term *Hinduism* was not found in any religious or historical book prior to Guptas. Nevertheless, later on, R.C. Dutt assimilated *Brahmanism* into *Hinduism* and his discrimination is known as *Vedic*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² RAI, pp. 138-140.

³³ DAI, p. 112.

Brahmanism and *Purānic Brahmanism*.³⁴ And according to R.C. Dutt, *Hinduism* was founded on the base of eighteen *Purānas*.³⁵ Those, who were supporters of what today we call *Hindu* sects, used their sectarian labels to identify their religions. Speaking of *Hinduism*, it is necessary to know that the *Hindus* have never been disloyal to their past religion and in the cardinal doctrines there is little difference between these two forms of faith.

Both *Brahmanism* and *Hinduism* recognize one great god, the all-pervading breath or the universal soul that is mentioned in the *Upaniṣads*. Both recognize the law of *karma*, rebirth, the bondage and liberation of soul, and the means to the final liberation. *Brahmanism* had no image worship, *Brahmin* performed their sacrifices at fireside and their offerings were often animal sacrifices, sometimes human sacrifices.³⁶ Whereas, *Hindus* do not use the blood sacrifices and they perform their sacrifices at the temples and shrines.³⁷

Image Worship in Hinduism

The gods worshipped by *Hindus* are Brahman, Viṣṇu, Siva and other gods.³⁸ The god Prajapati (god of prayer) in *Vedic Brahmanism* is replaced by Brahman, who is considered as the creator of the world. R.C. Dutt³⁹ maintains that Brahman and goddess Sarasvati, the consort of Brahman, were worshipped by *Hindus*. Really, the concept of Brahman's wife is not found in the *Upaniṣads* and Brahman is not the object of worship; he is only considered as the base of all existences and he had no wife.

Viṣṇu⁴⁰, the sun-god in the *Rigveda*, was appropriately chosen to designate the preserver of the world. Krishna is considered as the incarnation of Viṣṇu and his wife Laxmi, the goddess of harvests and wealth, to be worshipped.

³⁴ RAI, p. 137.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ DAI, p. 108.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ RAI, p. 141.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Rudra⁴¹, the thunder-storm god in *Rigveda*, was appropriately chosen for the destroyer of the world, who is called Siva or Mahesvara in the *Upaniṣads*. Umā, the daughter of the Himalayas, was his amiable consort and she was also called Durgā, Kali or Sakti is to be worshipped. In the time of Guptas, many temples erected for Viṣṇu and Siva, there was no temple for Brahman.

Siva, the god of animal or human sacrifices in the *Shaivism*⁴², was considered as a benevolent god in the *Purānas*; he loves living beings as his sons and he is also the protector of man in his ordinary life.⁴³

The blood sacrifices offered to Siva by the followers of the *Shaivism* were replaced by vegetation. This reason it seems might be disappearance of the *Theravādin* Buddhism, a religion of non-veg eating, from India during the Sixth century A.D. It became the main religion in Srilanka later.⁴⁴

Library Works of Hinduism

The well-known works of *Hinduism* are the eighteen *Purānas* or *Itihasa purānas*.⁴⁵ Their contents are influenced by *Mahāyāna* thoughts, especially the thought of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra* and the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*. Certainly the vegetarianism of the *Hindu* followers is influenced directly by the *Lankāvatāra sūtra* of *Mahāyāna* and their vegetarianism might have started from the Gupta age (6th c. A.D.).⁴⁶

D.N. Jha⁴⁷ affirms that *Purānas* were compiled from the sixth century A.D. to the age of Vikramāditya and Silāditya even after the conquest of India by Mahammada in the seventh century A.D.

According to R.C. Dutt⁴⁸, *Purānas* fill with sectarian disputes and upholding the supremacy of the special deity chosen from the *Vedic* pantheon and they present rather the religion and customs of *Hindus* in a new period.

⁴¹ DCCAI, p. 102.

⁴² KHI, p. 146.

⁴³ RIP₁, p. 605.

⁴⁴ RAI, pp. 137-8.

⁴⁵ DAI, p. 112.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ RAI, pp. 139-40.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Another important work was *Dharmasāstra*, the great work of *Manu*. This was the standard and authoritative work for all *Hindus* for centuries. Apart from these, the *Tantra*, poems, dramas, novels were also composed.⁴⁹ These works faithfully reflected the religion and the manners of the time.

(3) Limitation of Hīnayāna

Hīnayāna Buddhism is not only *Theravāda* school but also consists of eleven other schools, viz. *Mahīśāsakas*, *Sārvastivāda*, *Vātsīputriyas*, *Dharmottaras*, *Bhadrayanikas*, *Sammītiya*, *Sannagarika*, *Dharmaguptas*, *Kāśyāpiyas*, *Sautrāntika* and *Vaibhāsika*.⁵⁰

Generally, their doctrines are confined to the relative sphere, which can not answer to one's spiritual life and the religious practice in new stage, a stage of development of society, politics, economy and culture; especially economy of commodity occupied an important position in the social life. And the religious life in the stage also developed a lot. Those limitations are manifested through the thought and the practice.

Limitation of Thought

Hīnayāna laid emphasis upon the renunciation of the world and the attainment of *Nirvāna*. This is one of the weaknesses of *Hīnayāna* since they try to achieve *Nirvāna* for themselves, not for everybody. K. Antonova⁵¹ says that the *Hīnayānic Arhat* is unable fully to surmount the differences between himself and others and to achieve the state of his own 'non being' while *Mahāyāna Bodhisattva*, who turns his face on worldly life in order to help others. Out of great compassion for creatures and the whole world, he denies attainment of *Nirvāna*.

In the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra*⁵², *Bodhisattva* does not seek *Nirvāna* for himself but for the happiness of all creatures. *Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha*, in the

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ WIM, p. 192.

⁵¹ KHI, p. 140.

⁵² SSLF, pp. 289-90.

*Ksitigarbha sūtra*⁵³, vows that he never attains *Nirvāna* so long as all living beings to be salved from Hells.

On the other hand, *Hīnayānists* consider *Nirvāna* of *Arhat* as the perfect liberation.⁵⁴ *Mahāyanists* reject it and regard it as the magic city⁵⁵ or relative *Nirvāna* that only achieves *pudgala sūnyata*, *dharma sūnyata* still not yet completed. *Mahāyanists*' absolute *Nirvāna* is one's real nature that is the general property of all beings. *Mahāyānic Bodhisattva* abides in this absolute *Nirvāna* while he works for happiness of others. *Mahāyānists* teach that there is no difference between *Samsāra* and *Nirvāna*.

Speaking of *Nirvāna*, S. Radhakrishnan⁵⁶ emphasises that in *Hīnayāna* doctrines, *Nirvāna* becomes negatively interpreted as extinction of all being. It is not possible for ordinary man, who falls in love with annihilation. And according to him, the negative philosophy of *Hīnayāna* could not become a popular religion...

Hīnayānists, moreover, maintain that only monks can attain *Nirvāna* after making a complete break with worldly life, laymen and laywomen can not.⁵⁷ But *Mahāyanists* open the door of immortality (*Nirvāna*) for all without discrimination between monks and laity since *Nirvāna* is essence of all beings.⁵⁸ It is the highest principle that harmonizes all contradictions. It is *bodhi* or highest wisdom that removes all defilements and brings the final liberation to the suffering hearts.

Hīnayānists look upon the Buddha as a real historical figure, who was born and died like any ordinary people and had nothing extraordinary about him.⁵⁹

Clearly *Hīnayānic* teachings have distorted the reality and wronged the spiritual side of man as they ignored the groping of a higher spiritual state. The famishing and thirsting souls sought to the spiritual satisfaction from the Buddha's supernatural

⁵³ TSBKV, p. 5.

⁵⁴ NBT, p. 291.

⁵⁵ SEL, p. 115.

⁵⁶ RIP₁, p. 590.

⁵⁷ NBT, p. 312.

⁵⁸ BFLS, pp. 211-4.

⁵⁹ NBT, pp. 1-58.

blessing in order to placate their suffering but *Hīnayānic* atheism caused despair to them.

The concept of Buddha in *Mahāyānic* doctrines is more trustworthy. In the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*⁶⁰, the Buddha is looked upon as a god higher than gods and he never died. He can salve all beings from their disease and destitution through his power.

Speaking on *Hīnayānic* atheism, S. Radhakrishnan⁶¹ comments: “The philosophical atheism of *Hīnayāna* as the skeleton in the box, the diseased worm in the beautiful flower.”

This appreciation is completely correct since among Indian gods the Buddha is supreme. He has enough compassion and wisdom and he can salve all beings from their sufferings through his supernatural powers.

Getting into touch with the new inclination of society, the Buddha’s faithful disciples might have hesitated either to undergo modification or perish. As a result, these monks of new thought believed that they could capture the heart of people only by giving up the icy coldness of some forms of *Hīnayānism* and framed a religion that brings happiness to humankind. *Mahāyānists* offer to all beings in the world a salvation by faith and love as well as knowledge. The faith, which failed to quicken the flame of devotion, has been done and a transcendental Buddha has been taken shape. In *Mahāyānic* literature, the Buddha and *Bodhisattvas* have become objects of worship. The ceremonial and ritual aspects of worship assumed particular importance in this period.

S. Radhakrishnan⁶² says that the *Mahāyānic* Buddha is no preacher of penance. He does not shut his eyes to the suffering world when he attains *Nirvāna*. He offers light to it so that it may reach its goal. According to the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*⁶³, the *Mahāyānic* Buddha has three bodies, viz, *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya*, and

⁶⁰ SSLF, pp. 320-2.

⁶¹ RIP₁, p. 590.

⁶² SSLF, pp. 320-2.

⁶³ SSLS, p. 308.

nirmanakāya. *Dharmakāya* or body of law is the cosmic manifestation or the substratum of all existences. *Sambhogakāya* or body of enjoyment is the divine manifestation among supernatural creatures. And *nirmanakāya* or created body or material body (*rūpakāya*) is the manifestation of the Buddha in the image of man. K. Antonova⁶⁴ says that by these three bodies, the Buddha brings salvation to all creatures in the cosmic, celestial, and terrestrial worlds... S. Radhakrishnan⁶⁵ also assumes that with the manifestation of the Buddha's *trikāya*, *Mahāyāna* adopted to the various needs of the followers of Buddhism.

As mentioned above, the *Hīnayānic* Buddha has only a material body, after death, he has nothing more to exist. Simultaneously, the concept of *Hīnayānic Nirvāna* and the attainment of *Nirvāna* belong to relative truth. These limitations led to the emergence of *Mahāyānism* that purports to answer to the faith of the Buddhist in the new stage.

The Limitation of Practice

Generally, *Hīnayānic* sects only mention ethics, meditation and wisdom, without any mention of rites and ceremonies that attract and drag someone into religion.

Hīnayānic ethics is, generally, not complete because it allows its followers to take meat. *Hīnayānists* try to quibble that the Buddha allowing them to take meat if meat is not killed and cooked for them.⁶⁶ But one, who practises compassion, cannot take meat even if it is not specially cooked for him. He should know that when an animal is slaughtered, it certainly feels the pangs of death and suffering. Instead, the monk ought to love all living beings and can not kill them even in thought. He is party to slaughters in order to eat for satiety.

Again, the rule of meat eating causes unfavourable comments among the other religions such as *Jainism* and *Hinduism*, etc because the Buddhists naturally opposed

⁶⁴ KHI, pp. 140-1.

⁶⁵ RIP₁, p. 590.

⁶⁶ MN, p. 112.

with the doctrine of *ahimsā* taught by the Buddha and other Indian saints. This change led to disappearance of the *Theravādin* school, the religion of non-veg eating, from India during the sixth century A.D.⁶⁷ For this reason, the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*⁶⁸ teaches that vegetarianism is the only proper means for a *Bodhisattva*. The Buddha, in the *Lankāvatāra sūtra* explains: “There may be some unenlightened followers of mine after my death, who, not knowing the spirit of my teaching and training, may wrongly conclude that I allowed them to eat meat and that I myself ate it”.⁶⁹

Clearly, the rule of meat eating was certainly not taught by the Buddha. It is, perhaps, added to *Pāli Tripitaka* later on. On the base of the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*, *Mahāyānists* also extended the scope of ethics to the relation between human beings and animals. According to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*⁷⁰, *Bodhisattva* can not endure the pain even to an ant for all animals are said to possess the potential Buddha-nature. Har Dayal⁷¹ observes that some animals possess a few human attributes. Some dogs, cows, buffaloes, etc are true to their masters and to shoulder some heavy works for them. Gautama Buddha is said to be born as a hare, a swan, a fish, a monkey, an elephant, etc in his previous existences.⁷² If one takes meat, he unintentionally eats the meat of the future Buddhas even meats of his father, mother, sister, etc, who is reborn in the state of woe. That is why the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*⁷³ devotes a long chapter to this subject and several arguments are adduced in favour of vegetarianism. According to Har Dayal⁷⁴: it is the practice of meat-eating that makes one to become cruel and sensual. So the vegetarianism is the ethics of *Bodhisattva* who is going on the road to the Buddhahood in the future life.

Of meditation, *Hinayānists* advocate sitting-meditation. According to them, who ever wants to get spiritual progress, must renounce the world and practise sitting

⁶⁷ RIP₁, p. 605.

⁶⁸ SSLS, p. 368.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ SSLF, p. 21.

⁷¹ HBSL, p. 200.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ SSLS, p. 368.

⁷⁴ HBSL, pp. 200-1.

meditation.⁷⁵ They hold that the life in home is narrow and full of hindrances, while the life of a monk is like the open air. It is difficult to lead a holy spiritual life as a householder. In order to practise meditation, meditator must give up family life and ordinary social intercourse and retire to a secluded spot in the forest and must lead a life as a celibate hermit and recluse.⁷⁶ Such an interpretation certainly causes a major hindrance in the life of a laity, who is bustling in cultivation, commerce, and other social activities. The sitting meditation is only for monks and nuns, who have leisure time to practise it. On the contrary, *Mahāyānists* never ask their followers to renounce the world. They can practise meditation at any place and any time, even they can meditate while at their job. Because the purpose of *Mahāyānic* meditation is to experience and attain inner serenity and calm. That is always in the state of *Nirvāṇa*. If it is claimed that continuous and motionless sitting in meditation is right, it is the same as when Sariputra sat in meditation in the forest and was reprimanded by Vimalakirti.⁷⁷ Hui Neng⁷⁸, the sixth patriarch of Chinese *Ch'an* school, also declares that the enlightenment comes from awakening mind and has nothing to do with sitting motionless in meditation.

In fact, if by sitting motionless in meditation one becomes a Buddha, the toad will become a Buddha early. According to *Mahāyānists*, one can practise meditation in walking, standing, sitting and lying. If he sits on meditation motionlessly, he will become a stone or wood, he can not get enlightenment. In the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*⁷⁹, the Mahābhijñāṇābhībhū Buddha, before his enlightenment, kept sitting cross legged without moving his mind and body for ten small *kalpas* (eons), during that time the law of Buddhas did not come into his mind. Only after all defilements were removed from his mind, the law of Buddhas came to his mind and he attained the Buddhahood.

⁷⁵ MN₁, pp. 27-8.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ RHV, p. 24.

⁷⁸ LCZ₃, p. 87.

⁷⁹ SSLF, p. 117.

Thus, sitting motionless in meditation at a secluded spot in the forest or on the burial ground is not a positive means to enlightenment; it is only a possible means that keeps in defilements provisionally while practising meditation. After taking rest from meditation, defilements will develop higher. It is like some grasses are kept down by a piece of wood or steel and crushed, but soon after the grasses will grow up still higher and strong.

Mahāyānists give two new methods of meditation. First is the recitation of Amitabha's name, and second is the uttering of *Dhāranis*. Practising these methods continuously and with undivided mind is also considered as meditation.

Of wisdom, *Hinayānists* reveal three kinds of wisdom, that is, heard wisdom, intellectual wisdom and experiential wisdom.⁸⁰

Generally, these three kinds of wisdom belong to relative wisdom possessed by an *Arhat*. In other word, these are the cognition of sense organs or conventional wisdom. It is not intuition or the absolute wisdom that arises from one's pure mind. With the sensual knowledge, one can cultivate the good roots for attaining the *Nirvāna* of *Arhat* (the relative *Nirvāna*). He absolutely never becomes a Buddha with such a relative wisdom.

The absolute wisdom, which is the Buddha's wisdom, is mentioned in all *Mahāyāna sūtras*. According to the Heart *sūtra*, the absolute wisdom or *prajñā pāramitā* is not created, not annihilated, not pure, not impure, not increasing and not decreasing.⁸¹ This absolute is called by many names in the *Mahāyāna* doctrines such as Buddha-knowledge, original *bodhi*, great mirror wisdom, *sūnyatā*, *prajñā pāramitā*, etc.

Hui neng (8th c. A.D.)⁸² maintains that the absolute wisdom (*prajñā pāramitā*) comes from one's pure nature, it does not come from outside. Yung Chia⁸³, a Chinese *Ch'an* master (8th c. A.D.) presents four kinds of wisdom of the Buddha, that is, the

⁸⁰ HAL, p. 74.

⁸¹ SBS, pp. 134-5.

⁸² LCZ₃, p. 33.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

great mirror wisdom, the profound observing wisdom, the wisdom of equality, and the perfecting wisdom. According to him, the great mirror wisdom comes from pure *ālayavijñāna*; the wisdom of equality from pure *manas*, the perfecting wisdom from five pure previous consciousnesses and the profound observing wisdom from pure *manovijñāna*.

As mentioned above, the wisdom, which is mentioned in *Hīnayāna* doctrines, is the relative wisdom that can see the forms, sizes and colours of all phenomenal objects, simultaneously it can also know the impermanence, suffering and selflessness of them. Whereas, the wisdom, which is mentioned in *Mahāyāna sūtras* consists of both the relative and the absolute wisdom. The relative wisdom can know forms and attributes of all conditioned things whereas the absolute wisdom can know the nature of them. In short *Hīnayānists* only talk of the relative wisdom while *Mahāyānists* have both the perception of relative wisdom and the absolute wisdom.

(4) Harmonization of Buddhism and Brahmanism

One of the characteristics of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism is harmonization with other religions. *Mahāyānists* advocate that there should be no praising of one's own religion and decrying of other ones but on the contrary a rendering of honour to other religions for whatever reasons honour may be due to them.⁸⁴ *Mahāyānists* look upon all religions as the revelation from the *dharmakāya* and each of them tries to bring out some aspect of truth that is the all pervading spiritual force and the supreme principle of life. So wherever *Mahāyānism* prevailed (India, China, Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Tibet, Vietnam, etc.) the respective indigenous religions were tolerated. Especially *Mahāyānism* never seriously opposed the *Brahmanical* doctrines and practices. The *Brahmanism* also looks upon the Buddha as an incarnation of Viṣṇu.⁸⁵ *Mahāyānists* have still deified all gods and goddess of *Brahmanism* as *Bodhisattvas* who are the protectors of *Dharma*. The *Mahāyānists* returned the compliment by identifying Viṣṇu with *Bodhisattva* Padmapāni called Avalokitesvara.⁸⁶ The *Brahmin* ascetics were looked

⁸⁴ RIP₁, p. 605.

⁸⁵ JBC, p. 6.

⁸⁶ RIP₁, p. 607.

upon as the brethren of the Buddhist *Sramanas*. On the other hand, *Brahmanism* and *Mahāyānism* have close correlation of thought and the religious practice. Specially *Mahāyānists* not only respected the local religions and beliefs but it also took care to teach them a new aspect of life, kindness to animals and patient⁸⁷ but they did not teach of a grim, austere, self-repressive doctrines and to open the immortal gate for all without discrimination between members of different religions.

By these reasons, many scholars condemn that *Mahāyāna* convinced at religious superstition excessively and they themselves caused Buddhism to decline in India.⁸⁸

This condemnation is beyond the purpose of *Mahāyānism*, whose main purpose aims at the salvation of all beings and not to attack other religious beliefs. So it offers to all beings world over the salvation by faith and love as well as knowledge. *Mahāyāna*, moreover, does not expect everyone to renounce the world. It wants people to be part of evolving new social and religious ideals.

S. Radhakrishnan⁸⁹ also condemns that the so-called *Mahāyāna* Buddhism really a collection of various *Bodhisattvas*, saints, gods, goddess, who are only the ancient gods of *Vedic Aryans* thinly disguised by Buddhist symbolism.

This condemnation is completely correct because *Mahāyāna* always looks upon all living beings as the future Buddhas, the *Brahmanical* gods and goddess are, therefore, merely living beings and they will become Buddhas in the future lives. By this reason, Nāgarjuna, a master of Indian *Madhyamika* school in the second century A.D., taught that the *Brahmanical* gods, i.e. Brahman, Viṣṇu, Siva, Kālī, Laxmi, etc had the attributes assigned to them in the *Brahmanical* scriptures and were proper objects of propitiation.⁹⁰

The reconcilable attitude of *Mahāyāna* religion may be brought out by close relationship with *Brahmanism* as follows.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 596.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 598.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Harmonization of Thought

The Concept of Absolute Truth

The definition of *Brahman* in the *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*⁹¹ is similar to that of *sūnyatā*⁹² in the Heart *sūtra*. Both of them affirm that *brahman* or *sūnyatā* is never gross or fine... without eyes, without ears, without tongue, without taste and smell... no within, no without, etc. The concept of *ātman* in the *Upaniṣads* is considered as the Buddha-knowledge or intuition that constitutes the essence of man. It is not created by cause and conditions; it is the same between the Buddha and living beings. Due to ignorance, living beings have not yet recognized it and commit evil *karma* therefore they are governed by the wheel of *samsāra*. *Brahman* is sometimes, considered as *dharmakāya*, the essence of all existences. The *Mundaka Upaniṣad*⁹³ says that from *Brahman* all things spring up as thread from spider, as small sparks come forth from fire, etc.

Mahāyānic and *Brahmanical* doctrines show that the Absolute is beyond the conventional concepts. Nāgarjuna (2 c. A.D.)⁹⁴ holds that things, in their fundamental nature, transcends the duality of being and non-being. The creation and destruction, purity and impurity, permanence and impermanence are attributes of all conditioned things. The Absolute has no such attribute and it only can be described by negation and not by a clear definition and demonstration. The *Ātman* or Buddha-nature is also a substratum of a soul or consciousness or *gandhava*. Both *Mahāyānists* and *Brahmanas* affirm that the Absolute is not influenced by birth, old-age, sickness, death, sorrow and suffering while the body is influenced by them. Though the absolute does not enter into *samsāra*, soul or consciousness brings it into transmigration because it is potential in the soul or consciousness. It is like the wave and its moisture. The wave is high or low but its moisture is the same.

⁹¹ RPU, p. 232.

⁹² SBS, pp. 134-5.

⁹³ RPU, p. 673.

⁹⁴ KBC, p. 84.

The Concept of Soul

Both *Mahāyānists* and *Brahmanas* recognize one's soul or spiritual entity. It is the subtle body that is neither different nor having resemblance to the body. According to both, soul or consciousness enjoys the result of *karma*, suffers suffering and sorrow.

The concept of soul in the *Upaniṣad* is considered as consciousness or *ālayavijñāna* or *patīsandhi vijñāna* in the Buddhist doctrines. After death the elemental body is dissolved but soul or consciousness remains. Both the *Upaniṣads*⁹⁵ and *Ksitigarbha sūtra*⁹⁶ agree that soul or consciousness passes through from one body to another and owing the past *karma* soul assumes different bodies in the different times. When the soul or consciousness identifies itself with the Absolute (*brahman* or *sūnyatā*), the liberation is attained. Simultaneously both *Upaniṣads*⁹⁷ and *Ksitigarbha sūtra*⁹⁸ give a detailed descriptions of manner in which the dead man can be reborn. Both agree that man, who is reborn, is the heir of *karma* of the dead man but he is a new being. The Buddhist *Nirvāna* is not different from the immortality of soul in the *Upaniṣads* because it is an eternal state of being. The absolute *Nirvāna* is the unity of soul with the Absolute. Both affirm that if there is no soul, there will be no rebirth or no attainment of *Nirvāna*. It is called real soul when it gives up all evil *karma* and becomes one with the Absolute.⁹⁹

The Concept of World

Both *Mahāyānism*¹⁰⁰ and *Brahmanism*¹⁰¹ believe that the world is real though it has imperfect manifestations. *Brahmanism*, nevertheless, considers that the world is created by God with his *māyā*.¹⁰² Whereas *Mahāyānists* deny the role of God in the

⁹⁵ RPU, p. 460.

⁹⁶ TSBKV, p. 32.

⁹⁷ RPU, p. 267.

⁹⁸ TSBKV, p. 35.

⁹⁹ RPU, p. 100.

¹⁰⁰ BFLS, p. 70.

¹⁰¹ RPU, p. 190.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 673.

creation of the world and they hold that the world was made by cause and conditions.¹⁰³ According to *Yogācāra* doctrine¹⁰⁴, God is only a personalization of the creative power of universe or *ālayavijñāna*, the cosmic mind (the whole of universe) from which all things spring up. Yasomitra¹⁰⁵ argues that God cannot be the cause of the world. If he were the cause of the world, all things in it would be produced simultaneously but they are produced in succession. Both agree that the world is always governed by the rule of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness and change is the attribute of conditioned things.

The Concept of Bondage and Liberation

Both *Mahāyānism*¹⁰⁶ and *Brahmanism*¹⁰⁷ agree that ignorance and craving are the causes of bondage. It is ignorance that produces selfishness and knots in the heart that is fundamentally not bound by external objects. Samkara¹⁰⁸ maintains that it is ignorance that is the cause of attachment and aversion. Both *Mahāyānists* and *Brahmanas* agree that so long as ignorance dominates mind, the liberation can not be attained.¹⁰⁹ Because of ignorance and craving, one makes new *karma* by which after death his soul or consciousness is led to *samsāra*. *Maitrī Upaniṣad*¹¹⁰ asserts that by the result of past *karma* after death one's soul is led into the womb of mother where a new body arises and is endowed with growth in darkness before final delivery. *Kṣitigarbha sūtra*¹¹¹ also says that by the result of past evil *karma*, one's consciousness is led to rebirth in evil worlds or to be punished in Hells.

Liberation is freedom from bondage. When one shakes off ignorance, he becomes free from all selfishness, enjoys all bliss in the life, whereas when he lives in ignorance, he attaches himself to worldly things and to sufferings. The Full

¹⁰³ RIP₁, p. 623.

¹⁰⁴ STTMC, pp. 115-6.

¹⁰⁵ RIP₁, p. 631.

¹⁰⁶ SSLs, pp. 118-9.

¹⁰⁷ RPU, p. 464.

¹⁰⁸ SIP₁, pp. 572-3.

¹⁰⁹ RIP₁, p. 413.

¹¹⁰ RPU, p. 807.

¹¹¹ TSBKV, pp. 17-20.

Enlightenment *sūtra*¹¹² and *Bṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad*¹¹³ say that self-bondage will be continued until a man realizes the inherently enlightened nature or the absolute brahman in him.

There are two kinds of liberation mentioned in the *Upaniṣads*. First is the liberation during the life and second is the liberation after death. In the *Upaniṣads* the liberation during the life is called *jīvamukti* and the liberation after death is called *videhamukti*. Two kinds of *Hīnayānic Nirvāna*, *Upadesesa* and *Anupadhisesa Nirvānas* are but *jīvamukti* and *videhamukti* in the *Upaniṣads*. Apart from these *Nirvāna*, *Mahāyānists* give the ontological *Nirvāna* called *non-dwelling Nirvāna* or the absolute *Nirvāna*. *Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas* depend on the absolute *Nirvāna* to save all living beings from their sufferings.¹¹⁴ The absolute *Nirvāna* in *Mahāyānic* doctrine is the same with *Ātman* in the *Upaniṣads*. *Ātman* or the absolute *Nirvāna* is one's own eternal essence that is neither to be created nor to be exterminated though his body is subject to generation and cessation. When passion and ignorance be absent from mind, the absolute *Nirvāna* or *Ātman* naturally appears no need to seek it from outside.

The liberation where the individual soul or consciousness becomes one with *Ātman* or absolute *Nirvāna* it becomes immortal. Both *Brahmanism* and *Mahāyānism* agree that the liberation from birth and death does not mean flee from the world of becoming. He continues to live and act in the world though with a different outlook and the world also continues though it is no more alien to him.

The Concept of Knowledge

Three kinds of knowledge in the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*¹¹⁵, e.g. imagined knowledge (*parikalpita*), analysed knowledge (*paratantra*) and absolute knowledge (*pariniṣpana*) are equivalent to three kinds of knowledge in the *Upaniṣads*¹¹⁶, viz sensual perception, logical perception and intuition.

¹¹² LCZ₃, p. 39.

¹¹³ RPU, p. 96.

¹¹⁴ AIB, p. 377.

¹¹⁵ SSLS, pp. 157-60.

¹¹⁶ RIP₁, pp. 173-9.

Imagined knowledge or sensual perception is sensual cognition or relative knowledge that is possessed by the ordinary people whose thinking is determined by ideas of being and non-being. This knowledge knows only the form, colour, size of all existences. Both *Mahāyānism* and *Brahmanism* agree that this knowledge can not perceive the absolute truth or essence of all things. Sensual perception or imagined knowledge is that which generates one's imagination. For example, in darkness a rope is mistaken as a snake. Such an illusion not only misunderstands the essence of existence but it also falsely imagines of existence.

Analyzed knowledge or logical perception is possessed by *Hinayānists*, who can not go beyond the categories of particularity and generality. This knowledge only analyses existences into their material elements, it can not perceive the real nature of existences. The rope was imagined as a snake in a specific situation, now on analysis it turns out to be a piece of rope that is made by many small ramie fibers, and its nature is not known by this knowledge.

*Kena Upaniṣad*¹¹⁷ says that the real nature of all things is not known by reason but by renunciation of intellect and to live an innocent life as a child. The *Lankāvatāra sūtra*¹¹⁸ also has similar appraisal: The more going to analysis of the truth, the more going far from it.

Logical knowledge is also the relative knowledge. By means of logical knowledge some *Hinayānists* finally come to the realization of egolessness of all existences and to attain *Arhatship*, cutting down the circle of rebirth.

Intuition or absolute knowledge is the highest knowledge. Both agree that the absolute truth is grasped by intuition that is the transcendent wisdom or *prajñā paramitā*. This knowledge comes from the real nature of man. This knowledge is possessed by the Buddha and *Mahasattva*. By means of this wisdom, the Buddha knew the universe, its existence and its real nature clearly.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ RPU, p. 585.

¹¹⁸ SSLS, p. 135.

¹¹⁹ TFOS, pp. 10-25.

*Katha Upaniṣad*¹²⁰ says: Not by the speech, not by the mind, not by sight can he be apprehended the absolute but by intuition.

When all desires dwelling within the heart are cast away, the intuition takes shape and reveals the real nature of all existences and the final liberation is attained.

The Harmonization of Worship

It is said that the image-worship had no place in the *Vedic* pantheon. It has come to being after advent of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism in the first century A.D.¹²¹ D.N. Jha¹²² maintains that after coming of foreigners (1st B.C.), the images of the Buddha, Siva, Viṣṇu, etc were produced and worshipped in anthropomorphic form. The presence of various figures of Buddha and *Sūrya* in *Gandhara* and *Mathura* arts is the evidence of image worship in ancient India.¹²³

R.C. Dutt¹²⁴ holds that rites and ceremonies of *Hinduism* borrowed from *Mahāyānism* finally it supplanted Buddhism in India. According to him, *Mahāyānism* effected a great change in the manners and religion of *Hindus* and during the time of *Mahāyāna*, image-worships and ceremonies became popular. The harmonization between *Mahāyānism* and *Brahmanism* is remarkable. According to L.M. Joshi¹²⁵, in *Kashmir*, *Mahāyānism* and *Brahmanism* though had their apparent differences, remained very close to each other. In the time of Kusānas, the Budha and Siva were worshipped by the members of the same family. In the *Karandavyūha sūtra*¹²⁶, Mahasvara (Siva) is respected by the devotees of Avalokitesvara and he himself is addressed as Mahāsvara (Siva). In the *Saddharmapundarīka sūtra*¹²⁷, it is stated that in order to convert and preach the people, Avalokitesvara assumes the form of Mahasvara. L.M. Joshi¹²⁸ says

¹²⁰ RPU, p. 646.

¹²¹ DAI, p. 108.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ RAI, pp. 137-9.

¹²⁵ JBC, p. 16.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ SLFS, p. 289.

¹²⁸ JBC, p. 16.

that in emperor Harsa's family, the Buddha was worshipped along with Siva and Sūrya.

On the other hand, in the modern *Hindu* culture, it contains the important elements of Buddhist thought such as *ahimsā*, *karunā*, *dhyāna*, *prajñā*, etc. especially *Hindu* vegetarianism is influenced by the *Lankāvatāra sūtra* of *Mahāyāna*. *Hindus*, moreover, consider Buddha as a maker of *Hinduism* and worship him as an incarnation of Viṣṇu.¹²⁹ L.M. Joshi¹³⁰ observes that *Hindus* worship Buddha because their religion is largely based on the teachings of Buddha. The doctrine of *ahimsā* is practised broadly among the followers of *Hinduism*. The animal sacrifices practised by followers of *Shaivism*, *Saktism* and other sects of *Brahmanism* were replaced by veg sacrifices.

The Harmonization of Practice

Brahmanism shows three means by which the final liberation can be achieved. These three means are *jñānayoga*, *bhaktiyoga* and *karmayoga*.¹³¹ *Mahāyānism* also contains similar concepts, i.e. *prajñā* (wisdom), *bhakti* (devotion) and *anābhogacarya* (service without rewards).¹³²

Three means mentioned in the *Upaniṣads* and *Lankāvatāra sūtra* are different only in terms used. However, their essence is the same. Both recognize the role of wisdom that is considered as a prerequisite condition for the final liberation. The duty and devotion are performed on the basis of wisdom. Without wisdom the performance of duty and devotion will degenerate into superstition and egoism.

Prajñā (wisdom) mentioned in the *Mahāyāna* is also considered as the *Brahma-knowledge* in the *Upaniṣads*. *Maitrī Upaniṣad*¹³³ says that one who has *Brahma-knowledge* (intuition), gets liberated from evils and attains complete union with the Absolute. *Mundaka Upaniṣad*¹³⁴ mentions two kinds of knowledge, lower knowledge

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 330.

¹³¹ SIP, p. 169.

¹³² SSLS, p. 216.

¹³³ RPU, p. 811.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 671.

and higher knowledge. The lower knowledge mentioned in the *Mundaka Upaniṣad* is equivalent to sensual knowledge (*parikalpita*) and logic knowledge (*paratantra*) in the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*. And higher knowledge (*parinishpana*) mentioned in the *Lankāvatāra sūtra* is synonymous with the absolute knowledge or intuition in the *Upaniṣads*.

Both recognize that *bhakti* (devotion) prepares the pure mind for liberation. J. Sinhā¹³⁵ says that devotion is the means to the union of the finite soul with the Absolute. Suzuki¹³⁶ also states that devotion generates knowledge that can cause one's mind to unify with the Absolute through the Other powers (*adhishtāna*) of Buddhas that issue from their original vows (*praṇidhāna*). Both recognize that in devotion there is interaction between self-power and Other-power. Without this Other power that issues from the Buddhas or gods, one, who though has enough power and intelligence, can not be experienced his self-nature and the final liberation can not also be attained.¹³⁷

Both agree that through devotion, the devotee expresses his eager and sincere heart to Buddhas, *Bodhisattvas* or gods by which all passions are suppressed, all thinking and actions become good, the egoism and attachment are extinguished and his mind is full with lasting peace.¹³⁸

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*¹³⁹ and the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*¹⁴⁰ show two kinds of offering, the material and moral offerings. And both assume that the material offering is only equal to 1/16th of moral offering, the desirous devotion is the cause of bondage and the desireless devotion can lead to the union between soul or consciousness with *Ātman* or Buddha-nature.¹⁴¹

¹³⁵ SIP₁, p. 222.

¹³⁶ SSLS, pp. 202-5.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ SIP₁, p. 196.

¹³⁹ RPU, p. 314.

¹⁴⁰ SSLS, pp. 273-5.

¹⁴¹ RPU, p. 314.

Duty or purposeless action is the third characteristic of *Mahāyānism* as well as of *Brahmanism*. It is interesting to say that *anābhogacarya* (the service without rewards) mentioned in the *Lankāvatāra sūtra* and *karmayoga* (duty) in the *īśa Upaniṣad* have the same meaning. It means that both call for service without rewards. Through performance of selfless actions, one can attain the union of his mind with the Buddha's mind or god's mind by which the selfishness and attachment to possessions are gradually eliminated and the liberation is obtained.

The *Lankāvatāra sūtra*¹⁴² and *Praśna Upaniṣad*¹⁴³ teach two kinds of *karmayoga* or actions, the desirous and desireless actions. The former is the cause of bondage and the latter is the means to liberation. *Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas* always plead that a living being must sacrifice himself for the happiness of others; his work need not be concerned with fame and advantage; he must work for good and welfare of the world. The *Upaniṣads* and the *Lankāvatāra sūtra* emphasize the importance of purposeless actions, though intuition is still considered as the determined factor of the final liberation. *Mahāyānists* also state that two elements which create a Buddha is wisdom and merit; wisdom comes from meditation and merit from selfless action. Purposeless action itself can not lead to salvation but it prepares pure heart for liberation. The spirit of selfless service is one of the basic characteristics of *Mahāyānism* and *Brahmanism*.

(5) Patronage of Rulers towards both Buddhism and Brahmanism

Several rulers of India, who flourished from the first century B.C. to the sixth century A.D., took pride in following Buddhism and at the same time they patronized either *Vaisnavism* or *Shaivism*. These kings are known as the Sakas, the Kusānas, the Sātavāhanas, the Salankyanas, the Ikshvakus and the Guptas. They imitated king Asoka, who had already introduced and zealously practised the policy of religious tolerance and inter religious understanding, patronized both Buddhism and *Brahmanism*. In the Guptas period, the rulers patronized Buddhism and

¹⁴² SSLS, p. 216.

¹⁴³ RPU, p. 653.

Brahmanism zealously as a result both these religions had close relationship during the sixth century A.D.

King Kaniska (A.D. 78-102)¹⁴⁴, one of the Kusāna emperors, became a Buddhist. He particularly patronized both *Mahāyāna* and *Sarvastivāda* in his kingdom. According to A.K. Warder¹⁴⁵, Kaniska's empire was centered on *Gandhara* and *Kasmir* with two capitals, the former was at *Purusapura* in the *Kubhā* valley and the latter at *Mathura* in *Sūrasena*. Kaniska supported Buddhism and tolerated other religions, these evidences were displayed on his coins in which beside the image of Buddha, the gods of *Brahmanism* and the gods of Greek religion are also found. D.D. Kosambi¹⁴⁶ also informs that the images of Buddha and Siva appeared on the Kusānas' coins. According to him, in the Kusāna empire, there was no religious discrimination, the historical interaction between Buddhism and *Brahmanism* could be recognized.

S. Radhakrishnan¹⁴⁷ affirms that Kaniska moved his centre of power from the east to the west. He is said to have built a tallest temple (more than 600 feet in height) at *Purusapura*.¹⁴⁸ Under Kaniska's patronage, the fourth Buddhist council was held in Kasmir where the great split of Buddhism was acknowledged.¹⁴⁹ Taranātha¹⁵⁰ places the rise of *Mahāyānism* during the time of Kaniska and his son Vasiska. Kaniska used *Sanskrit* as the state language. So *Pāli* gave place to *Sanskrit* from the first century A.D.

A.K. Warder¹⁵¹ maintains that during the time of Kaniska, a section of the *Mahāsaṅghika* school was led by Mahādeva from *Magadha* to the *Andhra* country where the *Caitika Sāila*, one of the previous sects of *Mahāsaṅghika*, was founded. From this sect emerged the *Apara Sāila* and *Uttara Sāila* (*purva*) schools. The *Caitikas* in *Andhra* produced two sub-sects, the *Rajaritikas* and the *Siddhartikas*.

¹⁴⁴ AIB, p. 329.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ DIH, p. 260.

¹⁴⁷ RIP₁, p. 590.

¹⁴⁸ DIH, p. 260.

¹⁴⁹ AIB, pp. 325-30.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 355.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

According to A.K. Warder¹⁵², during the time of Kaniska as many as eighteen Buddhist sects came into being. Kaniska not only support Buddhism but he also supported other religions. Romila Thapar¹⁵³ asserts that king Kaniska supported *Brahmanism* to develop at *Surkhkotai* and *Mat* in *Mathura*, where many temples were built for deities. Though the later rulers of Kusāna converted to *Vaisnavism* and came to accept the presence of *Bhagavata* and *Shaiva* deities, they also supported Buddhism to grow in their empires.

On the other hand, king Kaniska¹⁵⁴ donated the cultivated land to Buddhist monks and he also granted the villages to *Brahmanas* in northern and eastern *Bengal* and the eastern part of modern *Madhya Pradesh*. Along with the land grants, the king also granted seeds, cattle, workers and exemption of taxes to Buddhist monks and *Brahmanas*.¹⁵⁵

D.N. Jha¹⁵⁶ maintains that during the reign of Kaniska many trade routes were established. Through these trade routes, *Mahāyānism* and other Buddhist sects traveled into Western and Central Asia, China and South-eastern Asia.

A.K. Warder affirms¹⁵⁷ that during the period of Kaniska, many missions of *Mahāyāna* and *Sarvastivāda* were sent abroad and Buddhism came in contact with the foreigners. In the process of contact, Buddhism received new data from the native people and studied their customs and habits to adjust themselves to new life. A special feature is acknowledged here that *Mahāyānists* did not destroy all indigenous religions but they still assimilated the gods of native religions into *Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas* who protected the Buddha's *Dharma*. According to Warder, the indigenous support to Buddhism came mainly from the mercantile communities that were by all accounts prosperous. As a result, many *stūpas*, monasteries, caves

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 277-334f.

¹⁵³ RPHEI, p. 223.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-71.

¹⁵⁶ DAI, p. 86.

¹⁵⁷ AIB, p. 278.

of Buddhism were built in native countries during the period from the first century B.C. to the sixth century A.D.

The Sātavāhanas are said to be supporters of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism and *Brahmanism*. A.K. Warder¹⁵⁸ says that *Mahāyānism* was most prosperous and many *stūpas*, monasteries and caves were built in the Sātavāhana empire. According to K. Antonova¹⁵⁹, the earliest of the *Sātavāhana* was Satakarni, who followed Shaivism, supported Buddhism and Jainism. It is said that the Sātavāhanas were the most direct successors to the policy of Asoka to honour and support all religions. King Gautamiputra Shatakarni¹⁶⁰ donated the land to the Buddhist monasteries; at the same time, he also granted villages to the *Brahmanical* temples and exemption from taxes was also given to Buddhist monks and *Brahmanas*. Such references to land grants are also found in a Sātavāhana inscription of the second century A.D.¹⁶¹

Romila Thapar¹⁶² holds that king Vasishtiputra, the son of king Gautamiputra, who ruled in the early second century A.D., helped in the spread of Buddhism in his kingdom. A.K. Warder¹⁶³ informs that Nāgārjuna, the famous philosopher was associated with king Vasishtiputra. The king became his disciple later on. This evidence was recorded in inscription of a temple at *Amarāvati*¹⁶⁴ and Hsuan Tsang also writes that Nāgārjuna lived at the Sātavāhana court.¹⁶⁵ Clearly, under the Sātavāhanas' patronage, Buddhism, Jainism and *Brahmanism* flourished in his kingdom. Specially, *Andhrā Pradesh* was one of the cradles of *Mahāyānism* that grew up during the times of Sātavāhana-Gupta.¹⁶⁶ The *Amaravati* school of art,

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 311-2.

¹⁵⁹ KHI, p. 131.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² RPHEI, p. 227.

¹⁶³ AIB, p. 357.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ KTHB, p. 87.

which was influenced by *Mahāyāna*, was also founded during the reign of the Sātavāhanas.¹⁶⁷

Apart from that, further south of the peninsula, the kingdoms of the Shalankyanas, Brihatpalayanas and Ikshvakas were founded in about the third-fourth centuries A.D. The first two ruled in the west *Godavari* district and in the *Masuliputtam* area. The Ikshvakaś empire was located further south in the *Krishna* valley. The Ikshvakas built the magnificent city of *Nāgarjunakonda*. The kings supported *Brahmanism* while the women of the royal family supported the Buddhist *Sangha*.¹⁶⁸

During the time of Guptas, all religions were honoured and supported by the rulers. Though the Guptas followed *Brahmanism*, they supported Buddhism. It could be seen in prosperity of *Mahāyānism* during the period. Vasubandhu, the famous philosopher of *Yogācāra* school, was patronized by the king Samudragupta.¹⁶⁹ L.M. Joshi¹⁷⁰ informs that most of the Gupta kings were *Vaisnavas* by faith, they were tolerant and benevolent towards other faiths and patronized the learned and men of letters.

On the basis of above evidences, L.M. Joshi comes to conclusion that: "The common patronage of two faiths naturally brought Buddhism near *Hinduism*."¹⁷¹

This assessment is not acceptable because the so-called *Hinduism* was a collection of quintessence of *Mahāyāna* doctrines and the local worships of *Vedic Brahmanism*. In other word, *Hinduism* was entirely influenced by the doctrines and ritual forms of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism.¹⁷² Even the *Hindus'* vegetarianism also comes from the *Lankāvatāra sūtra* of *Mahāyāna*.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁷ KHI, p. 174.

¹⁶⁸ RPHEI, p. 228.

¹⁶⁹ DAI, p. 97.

¹⁷⁰ JBC, p. 7.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² RAI, pp. 137-8.

¹⁷³ SSLs, pp. 368-71.

It is said that *Brahmanism* and Buddhism developed side by side in the time of Guptas. Among all *Brahmanical* sects, *Vaisnavism* became most popular during the period of Guptas; it spread in different parts of the country and even traveled across the sea to South east Asia.¹⁷⁴ *Purāṇic Brahmanism* or *Hinduism* was established in the time of Guptas, it is considered as a new religious form. *Mahāyāna* Buddhism had its special feature in image worship and elaborates ceremonial ritualism.¹⁷⁵ The cult of the Amitabha Buddha and his world of *Sūkhavati* had attracted the masses. Even eminent philosopher like Vasubandhu II, the master of *Dīnnaya*, was attracted by the doctrine of pure-land.¹⁷⁶ Beside the image worship and ceremonial forms, the practice of reciting Amitabha Buddha's name and that of *Dhāranis* for sacred and secular purpose were the most notable features of *Mahāyānism* during the period of Guptas.¹⁷⁷

Under the patronage of the Gupta rulers, Buddhism in both *Sārvastivāda* and *Mahāyāna* continued to flourish. And North Western India and *Kasmir* gradually became the centres of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism.¹⁷⁸ Many *stūpas*, *viharas*, *caityas* continued to be built and maintained except at old sites like *Kapilavastu*, *Srāvasti*, and *Gaya*, which are, according to Fa Hien, appeared in desolate and ruinous states. The monasteries at *Mathura* and *Pātaliputra* were active centres of *Sārvastivāda* and *Mahāyāna*, the great university of *Nālandā*, founded by king Kumāragupta Mahendrāditya (A.D. 415-455), became the great centre of art, literature, philosophy and Buddhist learning in Asia.¹⁷⁹ The highest achievements of the Gupta sculpture are the Buddha image from *Sarnath*, the best contemporary paintings at *Ajanta* have Buddhist theme.¹⁸⁰ Eighteen *Purāṇas* of *Hinduism* are said to be composed during the time of Guptas.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁴ DAI, p. 108.

¹⁷⁵ JBC, p. 8.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁷⁸ KHI, p. 143.

¹⁷⁹ JBC, p. 55.

¹⁸⁰ DAI, p. 114.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

On the other hand, the Gupta rulers also practised the grants of land and villages without taxes to *Brahmanical* priests and Buddhist monks.¹⁸² The missionary and literary activities of Buddhist monks such as Fa Hien, Buddhahadra, Dharmaksena, Kumarajīva, and Paramārtha greatly contributed towards the growth and diffusion of Buddhist literature during the period.¹⁸³

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¹⁸² JBC, pp. 8-9.

¹⁸³ DAI, p. 100.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTRIBUTION OF MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM TO INDIAN THOUGHT AND CULTURE

(1) Systematization of all Thoughts of Buddhism and Brahmanism

The Thought of Buddhism

The system of Buddhist thoughts consists of *Hinayānic* and *Mahāyānic* ideas. Generally, *Hinayānic* thought only mentions the relative truth (*samvṛti satya*). It means that *Hinayānists* only talk about the impermanence, sufferings and selflessness of all conditioned things. The absolute truth (*Paramārtha satya*) has not been mentioned in their doctrines. The main doctrines of *Hinayāna* are Four Noble Truths, the Theory of Dependent origination, five aggregates, *karma*, rebirth and *Nirvāna*. All these doctrines are explained according to the relative aspects.

Theravādin school is said to be the orthodox school that was established directly by the Buddha at Deer park of *Sarnath*. *Theravādins* do not believe in the absolute truth, they only believe in the relative truth. According to *Theravādins*, the universe was made by four material elements (earth, water, fire and air) and it goes on without maker, without the known beginning, continuously exists by nature of relations of cause and effects, and man was constituted by five aggregates (*skandhas*). His body belongs to material and his mind consists of feeling, perception, mental function, and consciousness. The so-called body is subject to birth, old-age, sickness and death. Mind is always disturbed by sorrow, grief, sufferings and lamentation.

Theravādins regard the Buddha as a historical person, the historical *Gotama*.¹ *Theravāda* aims at the individual liberation and believes that only *Gotama* attained Buddhahood, and they consider *nirvana* as opposition of *samsāra*. *Hinayānists* deny the *Brahman*, *ātman*, God and soul. It only accepts gods (*devas*) as the good ones, who protect *Dharma* and to help good men. Especially they believe *Arhats* as the worthy men, who had already reached perfect *Nirvāna* and had nothing more to learn.

¹ NBT, pp. 1-8.

Moreover, they believe that when desire, hatred, ignorance are absent from one's mind, he can attain *Nirvāna*, free from rebirth in the realms of existence.

The means to the liberation, according to *Theravādins*, is the practice of *sīla* (precepts) *dhyāna* (meditation) and *prajñā* (wisdom).

Sārvastivāda also belongs to *Hinayāna*, it branched off from *Theravāda*, the orthodox school of Buddhism², because it did not admit the *Theravādin* theory that all things are unreal.³ *Sārvastivādins* hold that all things are real and exist at all times: past, present and future.⁴ In fact, they only mention that the attributes, which constitute all things, are permanent. For example, moisture of water, the heat of fire, the move of air, the solid of earth, all are existent according to cause and conditions but they never vanish. The self-nature or the absolute of all things has been not mentioned by the *Sārvastivāda* as yet. Moreover, it believes in the theory of non-self, the absence of any permanent substance in an individual. And it believes in the plurality of all phenomenal things in the universe.

Like *Theravāda*, *Sārvastivāda* denies the existence of God and soul. It believes that the world is constituted by cause and conditions. Especially, it does not believe *Arhat* as the worthy man, who had already reached perfect *Nirvāna*. It thinks that the life of an *Arhat* is governed by good or bad *karma* and he must have something to learn more.

Sārvastivāda also considers the Buddha as a historical person. He attained Buddhahood and became omniscient at *Bodh Gaya*.⁵ Its concepts of bondage and liberation, and the means to liberation are the same as in *Theravāda*.

Vaibhāsika also belongs to *Hinayāna*, it branched off from *Sārvastivāda* on account of disagreement with the thought of *Sārvastivāda* such as all things are real and exist forever. It advocated that everything is momentary like a dream or a

² AIB, p. 325.

³ RIP₁, p. 380.

⁴ SST, p. 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

lightning and only the unconditioned things exist forever.⁶ According to it, impermanence is the attribute of all conditioned things. The unconditioned thing is the inner principle of all things that exist forever.⁷

Vaibhāsika believes in the theory of causation, *karma*, rebirth, *Nirvāna* and denies the existence of *Brahman*, *ātman*, God and soul. It believes in the reality of *dharma*s in their phenomenal aspect.⁸

Sautrāntika also belongs to *Hīnayāna*, it branched off from *Sārvastivāda* on account of disagreement with the *Sārvastivāda*'s thought, that everything exists permanently.⁹ They proclaimed on its banner a return to the genuine doctrine of *Theravāda*, denied, therefore, the permanent essence of all things that is suggested by *Sārvastivāda*. It re-established the doctrine that reality consists of momentary flashes that everything appears into life out of non-existence and returns again to non-existence after having been existent for a moment only.¹⁰ It believes that all things in the universe exist by virtue of the interaction; the existence of one thing depends on others. A tree can not exist, if there are no water, soil, air and sunshine.¹¹ *Sautrāntika* maintains that there is a difference between an entity, its efficiency and its appearance. The entity emerges from non-existence, exists for a moment and then disappears. Therefore, the *Sautrāntika* developed the *Theravādin* theory of impermanence into its theory of momentariness.¹² Though it denies the existence of soul, it believes in the transmigration of living being from one body to another body. It holds that among five aggregates of man there is only a subtle aggregate that comes to the transmigration.¹³

This subtle aggregate is a real man, it corresponds with the consciousness (*patisaṇḍhi vijñāna* or *gandharva*) of *Theravāda* and this subtle aggregate also

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷ RIP₁, p. 614.

⁸ SST, p. 37.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ SIP₂, p. 358.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 356.

¹³ BYB, p. 96.

resembles *ālayavijñāna* of *Yogācāra* school. Especially it believes that everybody has a potentiality of becoming a Buddha.¹⁴

By this thought, the *Sautrāntika* school is considered as the bridge between *Hīnayāna* and *Mahāyāna*. *Sautrāntika* does not consider *Arhat* as a worthy man, and *Arhat* had something to learn more.

Like *Theravāda*, *Sautrāntika* also believes that ignorance (*avidyā*) is the cause of bondage and transmigration. Living in ignorance, one is always bound and making the evil *karma* that leads him from life to lives in the circle of birth and death. The rebirth and death last until the desire or *tanhā* is rooted out from one's mind, and the liberation is attained.

The means to liberation is also the practice of *sīla*, *dhyāna*, and *prajñā*. Generally, all sects of *Hīnayāna* have not yet mentioned devotion (*bhakti*) and purposeless actions or service without rewards (*anābhogacaryā*). *Mahāyāna* Buddhism arose in the third century B.C on the basis of *Mahāsaṅghika* school.¹⁵ *Mahāyānism*, at first, had not any sub-sect; towards the second century A.D., Rāhulabhadra, Nāgārjuna's master founded *Madhyamika* school in *Anga* country¹⁶, then in the third century A.D., Maitreyanātha, Asanga's master established *Yogācāra* school or *Vijñānavāda*.¹⁷ Nāgārjuna was not the founder of *Mahāyāna* school, he only systematized *Mahāyāna sūtras* that were composed after the third century B.C. by some sects of *Mahāsaṅghika* school. And simultaneously he also developed the idea of *Madhyamika* that was founded by his master.¹⁸

Mahāyāna school mentions both the relative truth and the absolute truth while *Hīnayāna* schools mention the relative truth only. *Mahāyānists* regard the Buddha as the transcendental, eternal and absolute, who saves all living beings by his three

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁵ AIB, p. 356.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ JBC, p. 7.

¹⁸ AIB, p. 357.

bodies, *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya* and *nirmānakāya*.¹⁹ Apart from that, they believe in an infinite number of *Bodhisattvas*, who take vows never enter into *Nirvāna* until all living beings to be salved from the suffering world.²⁰

Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas consider the suffering world as the means to the attainment of their Buddhahood.²¹ *Mahāyānists* assert that *samsāra* is not different from *Nirvāna* because their natures are the same and they consider the *Nirvāna* of *Arhat* as the magic city.²² It is like a guide, who leads a large party of travelers through a dense forest, along a dangerous and difficult road to a jewel place. On the way the travelers become exhausted and they want to turn back. Out of pity to them, the guide thereupon conjures up a magic city and invites them to rest and refresh themselves therein. Only when they have regained their strength does he cause the city to disappear and urges them to complete their journey. On the road from the renunciation of the world to the final liberation are so far, the praticians become tired and they want to return back to the secular life. So the Budha firstly teaches them the *Hīnayāna nirvāna* to console them. Only when they attain the *Hīnayānic Nirvāna*, the Buddha tells them this *Nirvāna* is not complete one and urges them to attain the complete *Nirvāna* of *Mahāyāna*.²³

The Buddha, according to *Mahāyānist*, is not merely the enlightened one in old sense but an omniscient.²⁴ *Mahāyānists* deny the God, the creator of the world, and assert that the world was made by cause and conditions.²⁵ In other words, it is the creation of the universe by the universe itself.²⁶ God could not create it because he is only the imagination of mind, he is really not existent. *Mahāyānists* say that God is only personalization of the creative power of universe.²⁷ They only admit gods and

¹⁹ SSLS, p. 145.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 217-21.

²¹ JBC, p. 4.

²² SSLSF, p. 131.

²³ SEL, p. 115.

²⁴ SIP₂, p. 344.

²⁵ KBC, p. 316.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ RIP₁, p. 655.

goddess as the protectors of *Dharma*. They worship Buddhas, *Bodhisattvas*, gods, goddess and to have a special doctrine of salvation by faith.²⁸

The thought of *Mahāyānism* consists of the thoughts of *Madhyamika* and *Yogācāra* schools.

Madhyamika school uses the term *sūnyatā* for both, the relative and absolute truths. According to it, the relative is the means to the absolute truth. In the field of relative, it admits that all things come from cause and conditions. Impermanence, suffering, and selflessness are the attributes of the conditioned things. In the *Madhyamikakārikā*, Nāgārjuna²⁹ asserts that the whole phenomenal world is always changed since it was made by causality but its real nature is absolute. The Absolute is beyond thought and conception; it is unconditioned and indeterminate truth. The Absolute is not made by cause and conditions and it exists forever. According to Nāgārjuna, the Absolute is neither existent nor non-existent, nor both, nor neither. It is the same in all positive and negative beings. It is free from sin, free from old-age, sickness, death, hunger and thirst.

It is subtle reality that nothing can destroy it, death can not touch it nor vice can dissolve it. It is a self-existent and self-complete entity and there is nothing outside it to exist, from which all things are sprung, existed and then to return back to it. It is subject sees, not the object seen.³⁰

Madhyamika school considers the Buddha as the transcendental. He is neither relational nor non-relational, nor both, nor neither. The real Buddha is the real-nature of man, that is cognized by mystic intuition.³¹ *Karma* and its result are, according to *Madhyamika* school, unreal as a dream or mirage. If *karma* persists till its fruition, it becomes permanent and if it is transient, it can not produce its fruit after an interval time. If *karma* is permanent, it can not be the result of activity and if it is not the result

²⁸ JBC, p. 8.

²⁹ KBC, p. 85.

³⁰ RIP₁, p. 152.

³¹ SIP₂, p. 407.

of activity, then there will not be attainment of acquired merit and demerit and there will be no difference between the virtuous and the vicious.³²

The enlightenment and liberation, according to them, does not mean simply the understanding of the Four Noble Truths in their reality but the acquisition of absolute *sūnyatā* or Buddha-nature that constitutes the original enlightenment of all creatures. The means to the final liberation is the development of wisdom in order to know the appearance and nature of all existences and to become one with the absolute *sūnyatā* (the nature of all beings).

Yogācāra or *Vijñāna* is the second school of *Mahāyānism*. It was founded in the third century A.D. by Maitreyanātha, Asanga's master. It reached its climax during the *Gupta* age.³³

The *Yogācāras* recognize the reality of external objects, which were constituted by consciousness (the seeds of phenomena, mental and physical), is unreal. Maitreyanātha and Vasubandhu used the term *ālayavijñāna* for external and internal worlds. The former is the cosmic mind that contains all the seeds of material from which all things are constituted. It is *ālayavijñāna* which is the source of all existences and it is also the cosmic order.³⁴ All things exist in the cosmic mind (*ālayavijñāna*) and after perishing, they return back to their own original elements in *ālayavijñāna*.³⁵ The latter is the foundation of individual cognitions or a system of one's eight consciousnesses. Most of the scholars misunderstood the term *vijñāna*, they, therefore, hold that *vijñāna* means cognition and they come to conclusion that *Yogācāra* denies the external objects and reduced them to cognition (*vijñāna*).³⁶ *Yogācāra*, in fact, did not deny the external objects, it only says that the external objects, which were created by the seeds of phenomena, are impermanent, changing, and perishable.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 407.

³³ JBC, p. 7.

³⁴ STTMC, pp. 115-6.

³⁵ LSS, pp. 73-7.

³⁶ BYB, p. 108.

The *Vijñāptimatratāridasa sāstra*, one of important works of *Yogācāra* school, regards all external objects as the manifestations of *ālayavijñāna*.³⁷

On the basis of the *lankāvatāra sūtra*, P.V. Bapat³⁸ says that only mind or *ālayavijñāna* are real while all the external objects, which are manifested from *ālayavijñāna*, are unreal.

Ālayavijñāna is also considered as the substratum of individual cognition. *ālayavijñāna* is the spiritual body or subtle body of man that consists of the whole stream of consciousness (visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, bodily consciousnesses, *manovijñāna*, *manas* and *ālayavijñāna*).³⁹

The *lankāvatāra sūtra*⁴⁰ explains that *ālayavijñāna* is originally free from attachments and defilements but it is the operation of *manas*, a system of consciousness appears and to be polluted. When six sense organs perceive their objects, *manas* edges itself between *ālaya* and five consciousnesses and causing them to attach firmly to their external objects and getting rise the thirst, wish, and seeking for pleasures. One's sorrow, grief, suffering and lamentation come from *manas* that is not only a discriminating intelligence but also an agency of affection and will. When *manas* are purified, the whole system of consciousness becomes pure. When external objects were perceived by six sense organs, their data are brought to *manovijñāna* and then they are analyzed by it, all memories are then deposited into *ālayavijñāna* and they are kept and developed there. After death, it is *ālayavijñāna* goes to transmigration according to *karma* contained in it.

Tathāgatagarbha is an other name of *ālayavijñāna*, which is pure, eternal and unmodifiable. It is the bode of *Tathāgatahood*, where has no defilements of discriminating intellect and affection but when *ālayavijñāna* is disturbed by *manas*, from which a system of eight consciousness appear and all attachments, discriminations, illusions, evils take shape and they constitute the roaring waves over

³⁷ STTMC, pp. 115-6.

³⁸ BYB, p. 108.

³⁹ SSLs, p. 189.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

the surface of *ālayavijñāna*, and *tathāgatagarbha* is covered by all habits of defilements.⁴¹

Yogācāra also mentions three levels of knowledge. These three levels of knowledge are sensual knowledge (*parikalpita*), logic knowledge (*paratantra*) and absolute knowledge (*parinishpana*).⁴²

Sensual knowledge is also called illusory or imaginary knowledge. This knowledge is a false judgment to external objects and does not correspond to reality. It is possessed by all ordinary people. This knowledge can not know real-nature of all things.

Logic knowledge (*paratantra*) is knowledge of objects produced by cause and conditions. This knowledge is the relative knowledge since it only knows the impermanence, suffering, and selflessness of all conditioned things. This knowledge is possessed by *Sravakas*, *Pratyeka-Buddhas* and *Bodhisattvas* of lower stages who know things through their individualities and generalities.

The absolute knowledge (*parinishpana*) or the highest knowledge is possessed by Buddhas and *Bodhisattvas* of higher stages, who knew the essence of all conditioned things that is not made by cause and conditions, when all false discriminations are cut off, this knowledge takes shape.⁴³ This knowledge does not increase in Buddhas, *Bodhisattvas* and it does not decrease in other living beings, it transcends all apprehension of sense organs, it is attained through the self-realization. It is called by the seven names in the *Mahāyāna sūtras*, viz. *Bodhi*, *Nirvāna*, perfect wisdom, Buddha-knowledge, *sūnyatā*, the great mirror wisdom and intuition.⁴⁴

When a rope is mistaken as a snake, he has imaginary knowledge; when it is known as a rope that depends on its cause and conditions, he has logic knowledge but

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 157-9.

⁴³ *SIP*₂, p. 373.

⁴⁴ *LSS*, p. 112.

when the real nature of this rope is known, he has the absolute knowledge or intuition.⁴⁵

The concept of liberation is, according to *Yogācāra*, the self-realization of the completely pure state of *ālayavijñāna* or to become one with the self nature of *tathāgatagarbha* that is free from desire, anger, and ignorance.

The means to the final liberation is the practice of *Yoga* in order to transmute one's eight consciousnesses into wisdom. When one attains the self-realization of the Absolute, his visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, bodily consciousnesses are transmuted into the perfecting wisdom, *monovijñāna* into the profound observing wisdom, *manas* into wisdom of equality and *ālayavijñāna* into the great mirror wisdom. This great mirror wisdom is possessed by the Buddha, who was sitting here, knew the whole universe and any thinking and affection of living beings.⁴⁶

The Thought of Brahmanism

The thought of *Brahmanism* mainly comes from *Upaniṣads* because they are the end parts of the *Vedas* that systematize the ideas of *Vedas*.

The thinkers of the *Upaniṣads* seek for truth and resolve the problems that man always thinks about. They hold that one lives here whether in pain or in happiness, all has its cause.

If one be covered by ignorance, he certainly lives in suffering whereas if he lives with knowledge, apprehends his *ātman* or inner real self, he is free from bondage.

The *Brahman*, *ātman* must be something ultimate after dissolution of things. It is a self-existent entity from which all things spring, exist and return back to it after their dissolution. The world, mind, knowledge, senses and their objects are all finite and conditioned, and they are governed by the law of impermanence.

⁴⁵ SSLS, pp. 139-40.

⁴⁶ LCZ₃, p. 122.

The pleasures of the world are transient, changed and are cut off by old-age and death. One can not find his real happiness from the finite, only the infinite gives him the eternal happiness. The infinite is the real-self, which is permanent being, a spiritual reality.

In *Rgveda*, *ātman* is understood as the breath or vital essence, gradually it is developed into the essence of soul or individual self. The self is presented through four kinds: the bodily self, the empirical self, the transcendental self and the absolute self.⁴⁷ The absolute self is *Brahman* or *ātman* that is the foundation of all existences.

*Chandogya Upanisad*⁴⁸ gives some general characteristics of *ātman* which is free from dualism and imperfection, free from old-age, sickness, and death... and nothing can destroy it. Permanence, continuity, unity and eternality are also its attributes. And there is nothing outside it to exist.⁴⁹ *Maitrī Upanisad*⁵⁰ holds that it is the self constituted all living beings, all worlds, all gods and all existences; it is the truth of truths, etc.

The *Brahman* and *ātman* in the *Upaniṣads* are synonymous with *Dharmakāya* and the Buddha-nature in the *Mahāyāna sūtras*. They are considered as the substratum of both self and no-self and nobody can be skeptical about his real nature. In the *Katha Upaniṣad*⁵¹, the self-nature is considered as the highest reality that is the boss, who is sitting on the chariot, the objects are the roads, body is a chariot, emotions are horses, intellect is the rein, wisdom is director, elemental self is the enjoyer. S.Radhakrishnan⁵² considers *Brahman* as *ātman* that is one's own conscious principle and *Brahman* is also the supernatural ground of the universe.

The nature of *Brahman* or *ātman* is immortal and self-bright and self-demonstrated, it exists forever and it is subject of all experiences, it pervades the whole universe. It has no beginning, no end, though all things manifested from it have

⁴⁷ RIP₁, p. 153.

⁴⁸ RPU, p. 501.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 842.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 623.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 77.

beginning and end.⁵³ It is described by many ways by the Buddha, Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Mahāvira, Samkara, Kalpila, Patañjali, etc.

Like *Mahāyānism*, *Upaniṣads* show three sources of knowledge: The sensual perception, logic perception and the absolute perception. According to the *Upaniṣads*, the sensual perception and logic perception are relative knowledge that can know the appearance of things as well as the impermanence and selflessness of them. The real nature of all things can not be perceived by this relative knowledge, it can be perceived by intuition or absolute knowledge. Intuition is the result of meditation, which is a process by which the intellectual knowledge is transmuted into a vital power. Wishing attain intuition or absolute knowledge, one should give up the learned ignorance and meditate on the ultimate reality. By the practice of meditation or *yoga*, the mind of man becomes one with the Absolute and the final liberation is known.

*Svetasvatara Upaniṣad*⁵⁴ gives a meticulous guidance of the *yoga* practice when the awareness is taken shape, the *sūtras* are effectless.

Īśvara is also the important factor in the *Upaniṣads*. According to the *Upaniṣads*, *Īśvara* is *Saguna Brahman* that is the second face of the Absolute *Brahman* or *Nirguna Brahman*. *Katha Upaniṣad*⁵⁵ says that *Brahman* has both sides of peaceful stability and active energizing. In the former aspect, he is *Brahman*, in the latter he is *Īśvara*, the creator of the world, who is an active manifestation of the absolute *Brahman*.

S. Radhakrishnan⁵⁶ says that Nāgārjuna ridicules the idea of God; truly he only denied the deist's God, he repudiates an active manifestation of the Absolute. He is sincere in his devotion to the true God, the *Dharmakaya* of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism.

Samkara regards the indeterminate and unqualified *Brahman*, which is the transcendental Being, consciousness and bliss, as the ontological. He also regards the determinate and qualified *Brahman* as *Īśvara*, the individual souls and the world as

⁵³ RIP₁, p. 161.

⁵⁴ RPU, p. 137.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 618.

⁵⁶ RIP₁, p. 655.

appearance⁵⁷ whereas Ramānuja regards the determinate and qualified *Brahman* as *Īsvara*, who has internal difference, as the ontological reality and regards the conscious souls and unconscious world as attributes, modes or accessories of God.⁵⁸

Īsvara is said to create the world with his *māyā*. The universe is the manifestation of his glory as sparks emanate from a burning fire.⁵⁹ *Īsvara* is the ruler and governor of the world. The sun, moon, earth, sky are kept in their respective positions by his command.⁶⁰ All things in the universe, in fact, exist beyond God's wish; they exist by their powers of interaction. God certainly can not govern them.

The soul is also the important thought of *Brahmanism*. Soul is called by *Jīva* by *Upaniṣads*, it is also the empirical self⁶¹ that is different from body, sense organs, mind and intellect. The individual soul is potentially infinite. It is not female nor is it male, nor yet is the neuter. Whatever body it takes to itself, by that it is held. According to his past *karma*, it assumes successively various forms in various conditions. It is without beginning and without end.⁶² The soul is said to be master and active agent of senses, mind and intellect. It is knower, enjoyer, thinker and doer of the good and bad *karma* and experiences joy or sorrow, happiness or suffering. J. Sinha⁶³ says that the soul lives in the opening of the heart, unborn, conscious, and eternal and devoid of infinite knowledge and sovereignty, it is not perished while its body died.

*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*⁶⁴ asserts that when a man died, whose body is burnt, he remains only his soul. This soul then connects with father's self that is left into the mother's womb, there a new fetus takes shape and a new life is continued.⁶⁵ There is difference between *ātman* and soul. *ātman* is the supreme soul or self-nature of man, it

⁵⁷ SIP₁, p. 17.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 673.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁶² RPU, pp. 740-1.

⁶³ SIP₁, p. 18.

⁶⁴ RPU, p. 313.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 324-1.

is not only freed from *karma*, suffering, sorrow, birth and death while *jīva* or individual soul is controlled by *karma*, after death it continues to enter into the transmigration again and again and it assumes the beautiful or ugly body according to its past *karma*.⁶⁶ When individual soul realizes his *ātman*, he attains the immortality and unite with the *Brahman* as rivers, having different forms and names, merge in the sea leaving their names and forms.⁶⁷

According to the *Upanisads*⁶⁸ and the *Saddharmapuṇḍārīka sūtra*⁶⁹ of *Mahāyāna*, the world is real though it has many imperfect manifestations.

The *Upaniṣads* hold that material is not the first principle of the universe because it can not raise itself. The first principle of all existences is an absolute *Brahman*.⁷⁰ Samkara points out that *Brahman* is real but the world, which issues out of *Brahman*, is unreal and it is only a manifestation of the supreme *Brahman* through his power (*māyā*).⁷¹ Change is the pervading feature of the world. *Maitrī Upanisad*⁷² asserts that everything in the world is transient, rises, grows, decays and dies.

Like Buddhism, *Upaniṣads* assert that ignorance or thirst (*tanhā*) is the cause of bondage. The *Upaniṣad* affirms that there is a succession of lives according to *karma* done by him. So long as his ignorance has not destroyed completely, he is continually reborn in the three realms of existence.⁷³ If he practises the right thought and right action, he will be freed from *karma* and the liberation is attained.⁷⁴

The liberation, according to *Upaniṣads*, does not mean to renounce the world but to remain unattached to it. In other word, the renouncement of bondage is not neglectfulness of social duties but it is the perfect fulfillment of duties to the world. It is this perfect fulfillment of duties to society his mind becomes happy and tranquil.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 921.

⁶⁸ RPU, p. 190.

⁶⁹ BFLS, p. 70.

⁷⁰ SIP₁, p. 28.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁷² RPU, p. 797.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

He is not only freed from desire, hatred, delusion, sorrow, fear but also freed from merit and demerit that are the cause of bondage.⁷⁵

There are two forms of liberation mentioned in the *Upaniṣads*, that is, *jīvan mukti* and *videha mukti*.⁷⁶ *Jīvan mukti* is the liberation during life where one, who is freed from all desires, attains immortality. And *Videha mukti* is liberation after death. *Jīvan mukti* is synonymous with *Upādhiśesa Nirvāna* and *Videha mukti* corresponds with *Anupādhiśesa Nirvāna* of *Hīnayānism*. *Upādhiśesa Nirvāna* where only human passion is extinct but five aggregates are still present, *Anupādhiśesa* where all being is extinct.

Like *Mahāyānism*, *Brahmanism* also shows three means to the final liberation, that is *Jñānayoga*, *Bhaktiyoga*, and *Karmayoga*.

Jñānayoga is the means to the union of the finite self with the infinite self through intuition. The performance of sacrifice and duties without pure knowledge are unavailing. All attachments and other afflictions are rooted out by the intuitive wisdom. The indiscriminate wisdom leads to the identification of soul and God and attainment of *Brahmā-Nirvāna* after death. When a *Yogin* unites himself with *Brahman*, he is untainted by all defilements and passions, he acquires a mystic vision of the supreme self or *ātman* in all creatures and all of them in *ātman* and enters into the eternal life or *Brahmā-Nirvāna*.⁷⁷

Bhakti or devotion is also manifested through thought, speech, and action dedicating to God. Devotion with desire leads to rebirth in the heaven states while devotion without desire itself is the untainted merit of saints.⁷⁸

Nārada Bhakti sūtra says that: in the sacrifice, all desires are directed to God, all passions are suppressed, all actions dedicated to him, the egoism and attachment are extinguished, desires and aversions are conquered, pleasure and pain are renounced.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ SIP₁, p. 27.

⁷⁶ RPU, p. 121.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 723.

⁷⁸ RPU, pp. 314, 652.

⁷⁹ SIP₁, p. 196.

Though devotion does not lead to the final liberation, it prepares the pure mind for the liberation.

By devotion one's mind becomes pure, all sins are destroyed and renouncing all attachments to worldly objects and all actions concerning to selfish desire. In other words, *bhaktiyoga* leads to the experience of *ātman*, merging in *Brahman* and attainment of God.

Karmayoga is the same with *anābhogacaryā* in the *Mahāyāna sūtras*, both terms are explained as the purposeless actions or services without rewards. Through the performance of *karmayoga*, one can attain the union of the finite soul with the supreme soul or *ātman* or Buddha-nature. Performance of duties for the sake of others with perfect detachment purifies the mind, achieves the knowledge of *Brahman* and merges in the Absolute as a lump of salt is dissolved in water.⁸⁰

(2) Developing the Theory of Sūnyata and Buddhayāna

Theory of Sūnyata

The term *sūnyatā* is variously understood. To phenomenal field, it means the ever changing attribute of conditioned things. To ontological aspect, it is a permanent principle, transcendent and indefinable, immanent in all existences. The former is true nature of the world of experience; the latter belongs to the metaphysical reality.

The concept of *sūnyatā* in Buddhism consists of the relative *sūnyatā* and the absolute *sūnyatā*. But *Hīnayāna* only mentions the relative *sūnyatā* or phenomenal *sūnyatā*. It means that they only state the attributes of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness of the phenomenal world. The absolute *sūnyatā* or the essence of all things has not yet found in any *Hīnayāna* doctrines. The doctrines of impermanence, changing, and decaying of *Hīnayāna* answers to the relative *sūnyatā* of *Mahāyānism*.

Both *Hīnayāna* and *Mahāyāna* agree that the phenomenal world is unreal and it is subject to flux and change. All things in the world are compared to dew drops, to

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

flash of lightning or froth.⁸¹ They hold that nothing to be self-existent since all are based on an endless series of cause and conditions, all properties of things are relational and changeable.⁸² The law of causality conditions all being that is in a state of perpetual, becoming, arising, and passing away. There is sorrow and pain because all things are transient; they vanish as soon as they occur. It is the impermanence of object of desire that causes disappointment and regret.

On the other hand, both *Hinayāna* and *Mahāyāna* consider five aggregates (*skandhas*) as empty. Body, perception, mental volition, and consciousness are also impermanent and changing, none of them exists forever.⁸³

According to them, whatever is considered as self that is only a succession of emptiness, even wife or children, fame or honour, love or worth are also governed by the law of impermanence, none of them is worth pursuing. S.Radhakrisnan⁸⁴ states that what is subject to origination is to destruction. So change is the stuff of conditioned reality, identity of objects is an unreality.

Again, impermanence is only another name of continuity of being, a child, a boy, a young, a man and an old man are one person. In the *Madhyanta Vibhanga*, Maitreyaṇātha (Asanga's master)⁸⁵ calls this continuity of being is *sūnyatā* because the substance of one's body as well as the states of his mind change from moment to moment. Āryadeva⁸⁶ also states that the cause never perishes but only changes its appearance. Having changed its state, it becomes an effect. Clay becomes a jar having changed its state and in this case, the name of clay is lost and the name of jar comes into being.

Whatever arises from cause and conditions, is bound to perish. Anything born, brought into being and organized, contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution. Like the *Upaniṣads*, Early Buddhism recognizes that the whole world is conditioned by causes and things have no self-existence but are products of a causal

⁸¹ EVP, p. 92.

⁸² RIP₁, p. 654.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

⁸⁵ MVS, p. 26.

⁸⁶ RIP₁, p. 615.

series that has no beginning or end. According to *Theravāda*, this world of unrelenting change is not a firm resting place for man. The doctrine of relative emptiness is the common foundation of the *Upaniṣads* and Early Buddhism.⁸⁷ And this doctrine is developed by the *Sautrāntika* school into the view of the momentariness.⁸⁸ But to say that things are impermanent to be easy understood than they are momentary. The Buddha asserts that only the states of mind are momentary and not things.⁸⁹ It is evident that the body can last one year, two years even one hundred years but mind, intellect, and consciousness keep up only a moment and then come to perishing. When things are predicated in general feature, impermanence does not mean momentariness. Change is the common characteristic of conditioned things. If things were not changed there would have no different effects at different points of time though all are unreal, not non-existent.

Vaibhāsika's idea is more progressive than the *Sautrāntika*'s. It does not agree with *Sautrāntika*'s doctrine that all things are momentary. In *Abhidharmakosa*, Vasubandhu⁹⁰ asserts that only the manifested principles are impermanent but the unmanifested things are not. The manifested principles are the objects of external world, which are aggregated by atoms of material, existing according to the process of production, existence, changing and destruction. According to *Vaibhāsikas*, impermanence is the general attribute of all manifested things. The existence of a jar is really the existence of a series of changed jars.

On the contrary, the unmanifested things are never changed because they are not made by the material elements. According to Vasubandhu, there are three kinds of unmanifested things that is, *āśāśa*, *pratisamkhyā nirodha* and *apratisamkhyā nirodha*.⁹¹ P.V.Bapat explains that *āśāśa* or space is the limitless, free from all changes. *Pratisamkhyā nirodha* is the cessation of all defilements, attained through the power of perfect knowledge and *apratisamkhyā nirodha* is the cessation acquired without the aid

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

⁸⁸ SIP₂, p. 356.

⁸⁹ KS₂, p. 96.

⁹⁰ SST, p. 103.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

of perfect knowledge.⁹² S.Radhakrisnan⁹³ asserts that these unmanifested things never changed by any conditions.

Though *Vaibhāsika* has not yet mentioned the absolute *sūnyatā* or the self-nature of all things, it mentions both *sūnyatās*, the *sūnyatā* of the concrete and abstract principles.

Unlike *Vaibhāsika*, *Sārvastivāda* mentions *sūnyatā* of phenomenal things and that of the subtle elements of material that create all conditioned things. *Sārvastivādas*⁹⁴ hold that only the concrete things are impermanent but the subtle elements of material, which create all things, exist forever. The waves on the face of the sea are lower and higher, the moisture is not changed.

There is no speculation in *Hīnayāna* about what remains after dissolution of things, whereas *Mahāyāna*⁹⁵ believes in the essence of all things that remains forever. It means that from the doctrine of relative *sūnyatā* or impermanence of *Hīnayāna*, *Mahāyāna* develops the doctrine of absolute *sūnyatā* or the real-nature of all things and they declare that the real nature is unchanged though the form of things is changed.⁹⁶ According to *Mahāyānists*, the absolute *sūnyatā* is the substratum of all, from which all things spring up, exist, and returning back after their dissolutions.

The absolute *sūnyatā* answers to *Brahman* or *ātman* in the *Upanisads* and it is called by many different names in the *Mahāyāna* doctrines. It is called “the Buddha-knowledge” by the *Saddharmapuṇḍārika sūtra*. “The original *bodhi*” by the Perfect Enlightenment *sūtra*, “True mind” by the *Sūrangama sūtra*, “*Dharmakaya*” by the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*, “Buddha-mind” by the Chinese Ch’an school, “self-nature of *Amitābha*” by the pure-land school, “Absoluteness” by the *Tāntric* school, “Nature of *tathāgatagarbha*” by the *Yogācāra* school, etc.⁹⁷

⁹² BYB, p. 94.

⁹³ RIP₁, p. 615.

⁹⁴ SST, p. 37.

⁹⁵ RIP₁, p. 593.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 587.

⁹⁷ LSS, p. 112.

Though the names of the absolute are many, its nature is one only. The *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*⁹⁸ determines that *Brahman* is imperishable, it is neither gross nor fine, neither short nor long, neither shadow nor dark, without taste, without smell, without eyes, without ears, without mind, no within and no without, it eats nothing and no one eats it. All things come out from *Brahman* as sparks come out from fire, as plants shoot forth the earth or as the threads come out from spider.⁹⁹

In the Heart *sūtra* of *Mahāyāna*, such a similar definition is also made. Especially the Heart *sūtra* affirms that in the absolute *sūnyatā*, there is no Four Noble truths, no wisdom and no attainment of *Nirvāna*.¹⁰⁰

The above concepts are dual; the absolute *sūnyatā* is merely *Nirvāna*, the result of practising *Dharma*. In other word, by practice of *Dharma*, man becomes one with the absolute *sūnyatā*, without attainment at all. The absolute *sūnyatā* is neither lost nor acquired, neither positive nor negative. If it is positive, it is a product that is subject to decay and death. If it is absolute negative then it is non-eternal.

Nāgārjuna¹⁰¹ (80-120 c. A.D.), who develops the idea of *Madhyamika* school in India, described it by means of eightfold negation:

“It is neither origination nor cessation, neither permanence nor impermanence, neither unity nor diversity, neither coming in nor going out”. The absolute *sūnyatā* or self-nature of all things is free from dualism and imperfection; it is the subtle reality that nothing can destroy. Death can not touch it nor vice can dissolve it, it is free from craving, from evils, from fear and it is embraced in all.¹⁰²

S. Radhakrishnan¹⁰³ states that the Absolute has the two states of the unconditioned and the conditioned, the realm of real being and that of birth and death.

⁹⁸ RPU, p. 232.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

¹⁰⁰ SBS, pp. 134-5.

¹⁰¹ KBC, p. 84.

¹⁰² RIP₁, p. 153.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 593-4.

According to him, the unconditioned pervades all; everything or every individual is the manifestation of the potential whole.

Kumarajīva asserts that it is on account of *sūnyatā* that everything becomes possible, without it nothing in the world is possible.¹⁰⁴

According to him the absolute *sūnyatā* is the synonym of that which has no cause, that which is beyond thought or conception, that which is without measure. It is a permanent principle, transcendent and indefinable, immanent in all things. He explains further that the essence of all things is called *sūnyatā* since no category used in relation to the conditions of the world is adequate. To call it being is wrong because only the concrete things are. To call it non-being is equally wrong. It is best to avoid all description of it.

Thought and language are dualistic in their functions and what is beyond any description is non dual. According to *Madhyamikas*, reason and language apply only the finite world, the Absolute is only understood by intuition.¹⁰⁵ Whoever attempts to express the true essence of existences, he contradicts himself. This ultimate truth that science also can not reach. Nāgārjuna pulls to pieces of all experience, so that he may reveal the absolute behind existences. One can not see or feel something behind existences by sense organs. The Absolute is just the Absolute and one can not say anything of it. All thinking and discussion are relative; the absolute *sūnyatā* is beyond them. One believes in the Absolute though he can not see it.

Buddhayāna

Buddhayāna or Buddha-Vehicle is one of three vehicles of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. The *Sravaka*-vehicle and *pratyekabuddha*-vehicle of *Hinayāna* are only the means to the Buddha vehicle (*Buddhayāna*) of *Mahāyāna*. The *Saddharmapūṇḍarika sūtra*¹⁰⁶ states that as Buddha appears in the evil age of five impureness, one's mind is very vile, being covetous and envious, bringing to maturity very root of badness, he

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 663.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 664.

¹⁰⁶ BTLS, p. 61.

can not teach the teaching of one-vehicle to humankind. But he, by tactful powers (*upaya kausalya*) in the teaching of one-vehicle (*Buddhayāna*), discriminates and expounds into the teaching of three vehicles, really there is only one-vehicle without other vehicles, neither the second nor the third.

The *sūtra*¹⁰⁷ affirms that the Buddha expounds the teaching of three vehicles (*triyāna*) in order to reveal the one-vehicle (*ekayāna*) or the Buddha-vehicle.

To humor one's disposition, to the seekers of the *Svavaka-yāna*, the Buddha expounds them the Four Noble Truths and helping them to know the suffering, the cause of suffering, and the path to the cessation of suffering and the attainment of *Nirvāna*. To the seekers of the *Pratyekayāna*, the Buddha teaches them the theory of Dependent Origination to lead them to apprehension of the cause of rebirth and the cessation of it. To the seekers of *Bodhisattvayāna*, he expounds them the six perfections (*pāramitās*) to help them performing the self-benefit and the benefit of others. But after attaining some result of cultivation, they are satisfied with the achievement attained, without expectation of the higher prospects. By this reason, the Buddha expounds them the one-vehicle and to encourage his disciples to reach the *Buddhayāna* or Buddhahood.

Mahāyānists hold that *Hīnayānic Nirvāna* is but the means to the union with one's original enlightenment. Chapter 11 of the *Saddharmapundarika sūtra*¹⁰⁸ demonstrates this truth. In this chapter, image of the Many-Treasure-Buddha, who shares half of his lotus seat with the Sakyamuni Buddha, emphasises the union of the personal *Nirvāna* (the cultivated enlightenment) with the absolute *Nirvāna* (the original enlightenment).

It is very wrong when *Hīnayānists* consider *Arhatship* as the final liberation. Mahādeva¹⁰⁹ asserts that *Arhat* still retains a little of ignorance and passion. So he has something more to learn. N.Dutt¹¹⁰ holds that *Arhat* just attains the emptiness of

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ SSLf, pp. 169-70.

¹⁰⁹ SST, p. 158.

¹¹⁰ NMB, p. 122.

egoism to stop the rebirth in the three realms of existence. He has not yet attained the emptiness of *dharma* (*dharma sūnyatā*) and he can not become a Buddha, if he does not practise the four remaining stages of *Mahāyāna* (*Sādhumatī*, *Dharmameghā*, *Nirupamā*, *Jñānavatī*).

According to *Mahāyāna*, the Buddhahood does not come from outside but it is merely the manifestation of one's potential enlightened power. Whenever he becomes one with his original enlightenment, he is called a Buddha, who has enough compassion and wisdom.

The ideal of *Mahāyāna* is *Bodhisattva* as distinct from the *Arhat* of *Hīnayāna*. *Bodhisattva* literally means one whose essence is to benefit himself and others. In other word, *Bodhisattva* means a man, who is going on the way to the future Buddhahood. In *Hīnayānic* doctrine, the term *Bodhisattva* is only used for Gautama during the period of his search for truth. It is to say, in *Hīnayāna* doctrine, there is only one *Bodhisattva* Gautama before his becoming a Buddha while in the *Mahāyāna* doctrine this term is opened for those who render benefit to other creatures. Out of compassion for suffering humankind, *Mahāyānic Bodhisattva* denies entering into *Nirvāna* and promises himself in the task of bringing off men from the worldly sufferings.

The path to *Arhathood* is the practice of Eightfold path¹¹¹ while the means to Buddhahood, as elaborated in the *Avataṃsaka* and *Sūrangama sūtras*, is the practice of ten *pāramitās* (perfections)¹¹² and to attain the twelve stages of *Bodhisattva*.¹¹³ In the first stage called *pramuditā* (joyful stage)¹¹⁴, *Bodhisattva* practises the perfection of charity. He gives creatures both his wealth and knowledge with a view to make his contribution to the happiness life of sentient beings and to help them knowing the truth of life as it is. By doing so, the *Bodhisattva* gradually destroys his egoism, develops his compassionate heart and wisdom. The recognition of the impermanent characteristic of all conditioned things enlarges compassionate nature in him.

¹¹¹ BSB, pp. 135-6.

¹¹² RIP₁, p. 601.

¹¹³ HBSL, pp. 284-91.

¹¹⁴ NMB, p. 83.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing the first stage of *Bodhisattva*, continues to practise the second stage called *Vimalā* (pure stage).¹¹⁵ S. Radhakrishnan¹¹⁶ explains that in this stage the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of morality (*pāramitā* of *sīla*), he observes all precepts and the exercises of wisdom. The insight is developed gradually so as to render his heart pure and the mind free from the illusion of self. His faith, compassion, charity and disinterestedness are developed still higher.

The *Bodhisattva*, after attaining the second stage, seeks the third stage called *Prabhākari* (luminous stage) in which he cultivates the perfection of patience and forbearance.¹¹⁷ N. Dutt¹¹⁸ explains that in the stage, the *Bodhisattva* gives up all traces of egoism, training himself in meditation and developing wisdom. By means of wisdom, he also realizes all phenomena being transient, changing, and momentary and he simultaneously realizes the body of man like a burning house that is burnt with the fire of passion, hatred, and ignorance. He, therefore, renounces all attachments to the material world and to abide in his real nature. S. Radhakrishnan and N. Dutt have the same opinion about this stage.

The *Bodhisattva*, after cultivating the third stage, seeks the fourth stage called *Arcismatī* (Effulgent stage).¹¹⁹ Har Dayal explains that in this stage, the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of energy (*pāramitā* of *virya*). By his energy in cultivation of precepts and meditation, he can be free partly from desire and ignorance; his faith to Three Jewels (*Buddha, Dharma, Sangha*) becomes irreversible. He gets rid of all wrong views based on the passion and wealth.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing the fourth stage, seeks the fifth stage called *Sudurjayā* (invincible stage).¹²⁰ Bhikshu Sangharakshita¹²¹ explains that in the stage, the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of meditation (*pāramitā* of *dhyaṇa*). According to

¹¹⁵ SBSB, p. 496.

¹¹⁶ RIP₁, p. 601.

¹¹⁷ NMB, p. 111.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ HBSL, p. 286.

¹²⁰ RIP₁, p. 602.

¹²¹ BSB, p. 82.

him, the *Bodhisattva* not only understands Four Noble Truths but he also known the various other aspects of truth, from the relative truth, the absolute truth up to the truth of the Origin of *Tathāgata*-knowledge. N.Dutt¹²² adds that the *Bodhisattva* also possesses the knowledge of medicine, art and sciences and he uses them for his altruistic actions. And he also attains the *Dhāranis* for his protection.

After cultivating the fifth stage, he comes to the sixth called *Abhimukhī* (face to face with *samsāra*).¹²³ Har Dayal¹²⁴ explains that in the stage, the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of wisdom (*pāramitā* of *prajñā*). Through the practice of meditation and concentration, he apprehends the interdependence of all things in the universe and non-substantiality of them. And he also realizes the absolute sameness of all phenomena. He gets rid of the notions “I” and “mine” and he is free from desire. His thought now becomes firm, profound, steady, and pure. Though his wisdom is sharp, he has not yet completely free from passion.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing the sixth stage, seeks the seventh stage, called *Dūrangamā* (stage of Far reaching).¹²⁵ The *Bodhisattva* is so called because he transcends the personal *Nirvāna* of *Hīnayāna*, and moves in the direction of the ontological *Nirvāna* or *Buddhayāna* of *Māhyāna*. N. Dutt explains¹²⁶ that, in this stage, the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of expedient (*pāramitā* of *upāya kauśalya*). He acquires great wisdom in the choice of expedients for the benefit of creatures. He has conquered all passions and sins and he is free from them.

His thoughts, words, and actions are pure and he is in possession of all factors of enlightenment. He denies entering into the personal *Nirvāna* and coming into the suffering world to salve creatures. He works for the happiness of all without rewards or ulterior grace.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing the seventh stage and purifying his passion by means of knowledge and expedients, enters into the eighth stage, called *Acalā*

¹²² NMB, pp. 116-7.

¹²³ BSB, p. 498.

¹²⁴ HBSL, p. 286.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ NMB, p. 123.

(immovable stage).¹²⁷ Bhikṣu Sangharaksita¹²⁸ explains that in this stage, the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of aspiration. He apprehends the process of the evolution and involution of the universe even he knows the exact number of atoms in different elements, of which the universe is composed. He can assume different bodies and shows them to people as he thinks fit. He works for the happiness of others without rewards. Now he has enough powers and four fearlessness, which he has not yet acquired before. The *Bodhisattva* of immovable stage is synonymous with the immovable *Arhat* of *Hīnayāna*. It is to say that the *Bodhisattva* is completely free from passion and sin and he apprehends the thusness of all things but he does not allow himself to take rest while creatures live in suffering.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing the eighth stage, seeks the ninth stage, called *Sādhumatī* (stage of good wisdom). S. Radhakrishnan¹²⁹ explains that in this stage, he cultivates the perfection of strength (*bala*). The *Bodhisattva* knows all phenomena and principles truly and certainly, whether they are mundane or supra-mundane, conceivable or inconceivable, compounded or uncompounded. He is not controlled by the thirst of passion (*tanhā*) and egoism. He works for the happiness of others without expectation of any thing.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing the ninth stage, continues to cultivate the tenth stage, called *Dharmameghā* (the cloud of virtue). According to Har Dayal¹³⁰, the *Bodhisattva* cultivates the perfection of intuition (*pāramitā* of *jñāna*). The *Bodhisattva* is so called because his virtue can be compared with the cloud of *Dharma* that always gives cover to all creatures and saves them from the worldly sufferings. At the stage, the *Bodhisattva* is considered as to complete ten *paramitās* and his power of enlightenment answers to the absolute *sūnyatā* that is the manifestation of universal love for men and animals.

The *Bodhisattva*, after completing ten *pāramitās* at tenth stage of *Bodhisattva*, seeks for the eleventh stage, called *Nirupamā* (equaled wisdom) to prepare his future

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹²⁸ BSB, p. 499.

¹²⁹ RIP₁, p. 602.

¹³⁰ HBSL, p. 291.

Buddhahood. All scholars are completely unaware of this stage, except Har Dayal¹³¹ who mentions only the name of the stages. In the stage, the *Bodhisattva* simultaneously cultivates ten *pāramitās*. He is called *Nirupamā* because his wisdom can be equaled with the Buddha's wisdom but his vow of saving sentient beings has not yet completed. He, therefore, can not abandon creatures in order to enter the Buddhahood. In the *Ksitigarbha sūtra*, the Ksitigarbha *Bodhisattva* took a great vow that: "I shall not enter into the Buddhahood if all sentient beings still live in the Hells".¹³² Similarly a great vow was also taken by the *Bodhisattva* Avalokitesvara that: "Whenever all sentient beings in ten directions live in the happiness without miseries, I will become a Buddha".¹³³

Really, Hells are never empty and Ksitigarbha *Bodhisattva* will never become a Buddha because his vow to be too great. He can not complete his vow because living beings continue to do evil actions and they continue to enter in to Hells.

Bodhisattva Siddhartha¹³⁴ is said to fulfilled completely his great vow in the past. Though he was not controlled by *karma*, he volunteered to get rebirth in the world and becomes a Buddha in order to turn the wheel of *Dharma*, to salve sentient beings from their sufferings.

After fulfillment of the eleventh stage, he seeks for the twelfth stage of *Bodhisattva*. This is the last stage of *Bodhisattva* that is called *jñānavatī* (Buddhahood).¹³⁵ The *Bodhisattva* is so called because his self-enlightenment and enlightenment of others have completed in the present life. It is to say, he has passed through twelve stages of *Bodhisattva* and fulfilled ten *pāramitās*. He has apprehended the Four Noble Truths and the theory of Dependent Origination, the relative and absolute truths. He has immeasurable mercy, unlimited eloquence, ten powers, four fearlessness, concentration and emancipation. No one of *Sravakas* and *Pratyekabuddhas* is able to compare with him.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² TSBKV, p. i.

¹³³ RIP₁, p. 601.

¹³⁴ SSLf, pp. 218-22ff.

¹³⁵ HBSL, p. 291.

After becoming a Buddha, he has enough ten noble names and the three virtues. Ten Noble names of the Buddha are known as: 1) *Tathāgata*, who realizes the real nature of all things and abides in that real nature. 2) Worthy of Offering. 3) Right and Universal knowledge. 4) Perfect Clarity and Conduct. 5) Well-Crossing over the sea of *samsāra*. 6) Apprehending the World. 7) Unexcelled Worthy. 8) Trainer of people. 9) Master of Heavenly and Human Beings. 10) Buddha and World Honoured One.¹³⁶

And three virtues are: The virtue of *dharmakaya*, the Virtue of wisdom and the virtue of freedom.

According to N. Dutt¹³⁷, eight previous stages of *Mahāyāna* (*pramuditā*, *Vimalā*, *Prabhakarī*, *Arcismatī*, *Sudurjayā*, *Abhimukhī*, *Dūrangama*, *Acalā*) are correspondent with eight stages of *Hīnayāna* (*Sotapanna magga*, *Sotapanna phala*, *Sakadhāgāmi magga*, *Sakadhāgāmi phala* (*Adhisīla*), *Anagāmi magga*, *Anagāmi phala* (*Adhicitta*), *Arhat magga*, *Arhat phala* (*Adhipaññā*)).

He holds that the immovable *Arhat* of *Hīnayāna* is the same with the immovable *Bodhisattva* of *Mahāyāna* because he acquires completely *pudgala sūnyatā*, stopping the rebirth in the three realms of existence, the *dharma sūnyatā* he has not yet fulfilled.¹³⁸ So he must practise four later stages of *Mahāyāna* to achieve *dharma-sūnyatā* or Buddhahood.¹³⁹

(3) Contribution of Mahāyāna Buddhism to Indian Civilization

(i) Mahāyānic Contribution to Indian literature

During the period from the first century B.C to the sixth century A.D., *Mahāyāna* has an active contribution to Indian literature with its various sources of literature. Among *Mahāyāna* literary sources, the system of *prajñā pāramitā sūtras* or the perfect wisdom *sūtras* is most important.

¹³⁶ BTLS, p. 127.

¹³⁷ NMB, pp. 108-11.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

Andrew Skilton¹⁴⁰ gives four phases of the growth of the literature. According to him, the *Aṣṭasahasrīka pāramitā sūtra* in 8000 *slokas* (lines) is the oldest *sūtra* that was composed at the first phase about 100 B.C – 100 A.D.¹⁴¹ A.K. Warder¹⁴² maintains that the *Aṣṭasahasrīka* compiled in the south of India and it was re-written from the prose part of the *Saila* text. The *sūtra*, which now extant in Nepal, includes thirty two chapters. Its content reveals the relative and absolute *sūnyatā* (emptiness) and the practice of *Bodhisattva* path.

Sangharakshita¹⁴³ holds that the *Aṣṭasahasrīka sūtra* constitutes the original nucleus of the whole system of the *prajñā pāramitā sūtras*. There are at least six Chinese translations of the *sūtra*¹⁴⁴, the first is Lokaksema's version made about 179-180 A.D., the following versions are made by Dharmapriya in 382 A.D., Chih Ch'ien in 225 A.D., Kumārajīva in 408 A.D., Hsuan Tsang in 660 A.D. and Dānapāla in 985 A.D. Among these versions, Kumarajīva's one is most popular. The *sūtra* was also translated into Tibetan, Mongolian, Japanese and English. Dr Conze has produced an English version of the *sūtra* in 1958.¹⁴⁵

The *sūtra* of this class composed in the second phase, from 100 A.D. to 300 A.D. were the *Mahā prajñā pāramitā sūtras*, e.g. the *Satasāhasrīka* or the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 100,000 *slokas*, the *Pañcaviṃśti-sāhasrīka* or the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 25,000 *slokas* and the *Aṣṭadāśa-sāhasrīka* or the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* 18,000 *slokas* (lines) and the *Vajracchedika* or the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 300 *slokas*.

There is a tradition that the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 100,000 *slokas* was brought back from the world of *Nāgas* by Nāgārjuna in the second century A.D.¹⁴⁶ But *Hīnayānists* hold that Nāgārjuna himself wrote the *prajñā pāramitā sūtra* (in 100,000

¹⁴⁰ ACB, p. 102.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² AIB, p. 356.

¹⁴³ SEL, p. 137.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹⁴⁶ AIB, p. 356.

slokas).¹⁴⁷ In fact, there seems to be no reference by Nāgārjuna. He wrote simply and trying to establish the correct interpretation of the *Tripitaka* as recognized by all Buddhists. Even his *Madhyamikakārikā* is only a re-explanation of the original Middle way of *Tripitaka* and avoidance of extremes of speculative opinion and conduct. Apart from that, Sangharakshita¹⁴⁸ maintains that Nāgārjuna wrote a commentary of the *prajñā pāramitā sūtra* in 25,000 *slokas* in the second century A.D., named *Mahā prajñā pāramitopadeśa sāstra*. Nāgārjuna did not, in fact, write this commentary. It was written by Nāgārjuna II¹⁴⁹ or Nāgārbodhi (Nāgārjuna I's disciple) in the second century A.D. Nāgārbodhi's important works are *Mahā prajñā pāramitopadeśa* and *Dvādasadvāra*, now extant in Chinese translations.

As Conze¹⁵⁰ has shown these texts (the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 100,000 lines, the perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 25,000 lines and the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 18,000 lines) are really one and the same book. They only differ in the extent to which the repetitions are copied out. All three texts of large Perfect wisdom *sūtra* were translated into Chinese, Tibetan, and Mongolian in different periods.

Besides, a *Dasasāhasrika*¹⁵¹ or the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 10,000 *slokas* is also sometimes classed with the large *sūtras*. The special feature of the *sūtra* is the definitions of the terms, that are scattered through three main versions of the large Perfect wisdom *sūtras*. The *Vajracchedika* or Diamond Cutter *sūtra* in which the Buddha teaches the method of subduing mind and abiding mind and avoidance of attachments of ego and *dharmas*. The last work is the Perfect wisdom *sūtra* in 100 lines that was taught by Mañjūri. It was translated into Chinese, Tibetan, and Mongolian.¹⁵²

The *sūtras* of this class composed in the third phase, from 300-500 A.D., were the shorter *sūtras*, specially the *Hṛdaya prajñā pāramitā sūtra* or the Heart *sūtra* in

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

¹⁴⁸ SEL, p. 147.

¹⁴⁹ AIB, p. 369.

¹⁵⁰ SEL, p. 10.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 154.

which the relative and absolute *sūnyatā* are taught. Though there is some evidences to suggest that this particular text was originally written in Chinese and then translated back into *Sanskrit*.¹⁵³ But the *sūtra* is, in fact, an Indian *Sanskrit* text. According to Sangharakshita¹⁵⁴, the recension of Heart *sūtra* has been found in palm leaf form in Japan, the recension of the *sūtra* has been brought into Japan in 850 A.D. There are seven Chinese translations of the *sūtra*, Kumarajīva's version in 400 A.D., Hsuan Tsang in 649 A.D., Dharmacandra in 741A.D., Prajñā in 790 A.D., Prajñācakra in 861 A.D., Fa Cheng in 856 A.D. and Dānapāla in 1000 A.D. It was translated into Tibetan by Vimalamitra. The thought of Heart *sūtra* influenced the thoughts of Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Bhāvavika, Candrakīrti and Santideva.¹⁵⁵

According to L.M Joshi¹⁵⁶, the classical *Vedāntists* took this twofold truth theory from the *sūtra* for the basis of their theories.

The last phase of producing *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras*, according to Andrew Skilton, was from 500 to 1000 A.D., while Sangharakshita asserts that the last phase of texts from 600 to 1200 A.D. It means that the last phase of producing texts, according to Sangharakshita, to be later than 100 years comparing with Andrew Skilton's suggestion. In this phase, most of *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras* were influenced by *Tantric* elements and so many commentaries of *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras* appeared in this phase.

The main literature, generally, used in the whole system of *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras* is the Negative-dialectical literature. The characteristic of the literature is to negate attributes and determining the real nature of all things. This is the most important literature of *Mahāyāna*, it is not found in any *Hīnayāna sūtras*. According to L.M Joshi, Gaudapāda and Saṃkara (6th CAD), the earliest and greatest masters of *Advaita Vedānta* school were influenced by the literature.¹⁵⁷ The conception of the Absolute (*Nirguna Brahman*) in *Advaita Vedānta* is similar to the absolute *sūnyatā* in

¹⁵³ ACB, p. 102.

¹⁵⁴ SEL, p. 153.

¹⁵⁵ JBC, p. 345.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

the *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras*. Here, the word *sūnyatā* stands for negation of all determinations. *Nirguna Brahman* is considered as *sūnyatā* because it is devoid of all attributes. On other hand, *sūnyatā* is also considered as the ground of the conditioned world. The *Madhyamikakārikā* the theories of Samkara's *Advaita Vedānta*¹⁵⁸ and Rāmanuja's *Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta* philosophy mention it.¹⁵⁹

The impact of dialectics of *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras* is particularly predominant in the works of Srī Harsa, a *Vedāntist* of Samkara's school in the twelfth century A.D.¹⁶⁰

Another important *sūtra* of *Mahāyāna* is the *Vimalakirtinideśa sūtra*. This *sūtra* stands for the whole system of the *sūtras* of the Realistic-critical literature. The *sūtra* was compiled some 150 A.D.¹⁶¹, it becomes extremely popular in the countries practising *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. The *sūtra* consists of thirteen chapters in which the non-dualism of the Absolute is revealed and the extreme actions in the practice of dharma are also criticized.¹⁶²

There are two Chinese translations of the *sūtra*. The former is Kumārajīva's version in 406 A.D. and the latter is Hsuan Tsang's version in 650 A.D. Kumārajīva's version is popular in China, Japan, Vietnam, and Mongolia.

According to its own account, the *sūtra* originated in *Vaisali* where appeared the second Buddhist council. The *sūtra* not only upholds the *Bodhisattva* ideal but glorifies the role of layman in the attainment of enlightenment. An important idea of the *sūtra* that: If a *Bodhisattva* wishes to attain a pure-land, he should firstly purify his mind. When his mind is pure, his pure land will be pure.¹⁶³

The Realistic critical literature is the main literature used in the *sūtra*. This is also the second important literature of *Mahāyānism*. The characteristic of the literature

¹⁵⁸ SIP₁, p. 36.

¹⁵⁹ SIP₂, p. 652.

¹⁶⁰ JBC, p. 345.

¹⁶¹ ACB, p. 105.

¹⁶² RHV, pp. 73-89.

¹⁶³ SEL, p. 160.

is to criticize the dual actions and thoughts and revealing non-dualism of the Absolute. The doctrine of non-dual idealist absolute was developed by Maitreyanātha, Vasabandhu and Asanga. Dinnāga¹⁶⁴ has declared that “the climax of wisdom is the non-dual absolute”.

Samkara’s idea is seemingly influenced by the doctrine of *Mahāyāna* non-dualism; he regards the individual souls, God or qualified *Brahman* as the phenomenal appearances and the unqualified *Brahman* as the ontological reality or non-dualism.¹⁶⁵

The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* was composed between 100 BC-100 A.D.¹⁶⁶ It is a composite text that shows an overall division into two sections, the first relating to *Upāya* (skilful means) and *Ekayāna* (one vehicle)¹⁶⁷, and the latter to life-span of the Buddha.¹⁶⁸ The *Upāya* or skilful means is the central teaching of the *sūtra*, the teachings of three vehicles (*yāna*) are only temporary expedients made necessary by the diversity of temperament among the Buddha’s disciples as well as by their varying degree of spiritual developments. In reality, there is but one vehicle, great vehicle (*Buddhayāna*) therein the Buddha himself abides and by means of which he delivers all living beings, leading them from the provisional to the final truth, from partial to complete enlightenment. The teachings of three vehicles were expounded for the purpose of revealing the one vehicle.¹⁶⁹ Andrew Skilton¹⁷⁰ maintains that the *sūtra* developed from the teachings of *lokottaravāda*, a branch of *Mahasanghika* schools. The *sūtra* consists of twenty eight chapters, each of which mentions an important factor of philosophy. There are six Chinese translations of the *sūtra*, the Kalasivi’s version made in 255 A.D., two versions of Dharmarakṣa, the first about 265-316 A.D. and the latter some 268 A.D., Zhi dao Gen’s version some 335 A.D., Kumārajīva in 406 A.D. and the version of Dharmagupta and Jñānagupta some 601 A.D. Among

¹⁶⁴ JBC, pp. 341-2.

¹⁶⁵ RIP₂, p. 468.

¹⁶⁶ ACB, p. 102.

¹⁶⁷ BTLS, pp. 15-7.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 250-3.

¹⁶⁹ ACB, pp. 102-3.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

these translations, Kumārajīva's version, Jñānagupta and Dharmagupta's version, and Dharmarakṣa's second version are extant in China, other translations are lost.

There were many commentaries of the *sūtra* in India and other countries between 200-600 A.D. specially a commentary the *sūtra* was made by Vasubandhu II about 550-600 A.D.¹⁷¹ According to Sangharakṣita, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* is not only a religious classic, but a masterpiece of symbolic literature.¹⁷² His appreciation is entirely correct because the *sūtra* uses many philosophical images to symbolize truths. Even each *Bodhisattva*, each philosophical image stands for the characteristic of man. For example, in the chapter eleven, the Prabhūtaratna Buddha stands for the Buddha-nature or the original enlightenment or the Absolute that is potential in everybody. The Sakyamuni Buddha, in the chapter, is symbolized the enlightenment obtained by the practice of *Dharma* or the recent enlightenment or the pure soul. The image of the Prabhūtaratna Buddha, who share his half lotus throne to the Sakyamuni Buddha, stands for the union between the Absolute and pure soul. When the pure soul becomes one with the Absolute, man attains the final liberation or the immortality just in this life. The *stūpa* of seven precious things stands for the *dharmakāya* or real body of man in which has enough seven precious things, that is, faith, observance of precepts, hearing instruction, shame for self, shame for others, wisdom and renunciation.

The symbolic literature is the third kind of *Mahāyāna* literature. This literature seemingly influenced the thought of Rāmanuja, who was the founder of the *Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta* school, regards God as symbolization of truth and according to him there is no distinction between the indeterminate *Brahman* (*Nirguna Brahman*) and the determinate *Brahman* (*Saguna Brahman*).¹⁷³

The *Sukhavatīvyūha sūtra* is of two versions, long and short ones. In the long version¹⁷⁴, it talks about the *Bodhisattva* Dharmakara, who took forty-eight vows to establish the Pure-land, became a Buddha there, called Amitabha Buddha. The pure-

¹⁷¹ HMLJ, pp. 5-6.

¹⁷² SEL, p. 106.

¹⁷³ RIP₂, p. 661.

¹⁷⁴ SEL, pp. 170-3.

land is described by the Sakyamuni Buddha in more detail with its earth being covered by seven precious things, e.g. gold, silver, diamond and other jewels, without bumpiness of mountains, hills and stones, etc. Living beings there spend their times in pleasurable play and enjoy what they wish.

In the short version¹⁷⁵, it aims at the practice of pure-land teachings. Faith, virtue and vow are special features mentioned in the version. It states that those who set their minds on Amitabha Buddha, cultivating unmeasured roots of good (*kusalamūla*) and vowing to be born into that world, they will be reborn there after death. Even those who have not often set their minds on the Amitabha Buddha and without cultivation of the roots of good very much, can be reborn there, if they imagine Amitabha Buddha in front of them at the moment of their death. Even those who, at the moment of their death, recite Amitabha Buddha's name only ten times with their one-minds, they can be also reborn in pure-land. Moreover, the *Bodhisattvas*, who were born in the pure-land, can become Buddha only after one more rebirth, if they wish. In the pure-land, living beings have not sense of possessing and to have no thought of pleasures or of non-pleasures.

In pure land, there is no quarrelling, dispute or opposition, their thoughts are all impartial, benevolent, mild, affectionate, unobstructed, etc.

There are three Chinese translations of the short *sūtra*, the first by Kumārajīva in 402 A.D. and subsequently by Gunabhadra and Hsuan Tsang.¹⁷⁶ The long version has also twelve Chinese translations, five of them are still extant, the earliest having done between 147 and 186 A.D. Thus the date of composition of the *sūtra* cannot be placed later than the first century A.D.¹⁷⁷

Besides, there is another *sūtra* relating to pure-land teachings namely the 'Meditation on Amitabha *sūtra*'.¹⁷⁸ The *sūtra* is said to be expounded by the Sakyamuni Buddha at the vulture peak, *Rajagriha*, *Bihar*. The *sūtra* relates the facts of

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

Indian history, that after taking the throne of *Magadha*, Ajatasatru had imprisoned his father king Bimbisāra and attempted to starve him to death. The king is saved by his faithful consort Vaidehi, who secretly provides him with nutriment. On hearing of this, Ajatasatru became angry and kept her in prison. At that time, king Bimbisāra without food, his body was wicked and going to death. King prayed the Buddha, he appeared in front of Bimbisāra and taught him of Amitabha Buddha's pure-land and recitation of Amitabha Buddha name. After hearing the teaching, king Bimbisāra died with a happy mind and to be reborn in the pure-land. After the death of king Bimbisāra, the queen got suffering so much; the Buddha taught her sixteen methods of meditation on the Amitabha Buddha in order to help her free from suffering. The *sūtra* was translated into Chinese by Kālayasa, who arrived in China from India 424 A.D.¹⁷⁹

The literature used in the *Sukhavativyūha sūtra* is the literature of self-relation. This is the fourth important literature of *Mahāyāna* that can not be found in any *Hīnayāna sūtras*. By the literature, the Buddha gives an account of his first-hand experience of the pure-land and the means to rebirth in that world.

The *Avatamsaka sūtra* and the *Lankāvatāra sūtras* are also the important works of the depictive literature of *Mahāyāna*.

The *Avatamsaka* or the Flower ornament *sūtra* or the *Buddhāvatamsaka sūtra* has been eulogized by Suzuki in the most enthusiastic terms.

It was composed between 1st CBC – 1st CAD. According to Suzuki¹⁸⁰, there are three Chinese translations of the *Avatamsaka sūtra*, in sixty, eighty and forty fascicules respectively, the first had been made by Buddhahadra between 418-420 A.D., the second by Siksānanda between 695-699 A.D., and the third by Prajñā some 796-797 A.D.

The *Avatamsaka sūtra* in forty fascicules is mainly the *Gaṇḍavyūha sūtra* in Sanskrit source, extant in Nepal now. It describes the religious search made by the

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ SEZ₃, p. 71.

young man Sudhana for true *Dharma* through his spiritual friends.¹⁸¹ The Vairocana appears in the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* most notably in the *Gaṇḍhavyūha* chapter. The *Dasabhūmika* is also an independent chapter in the *Avataṃsaka* of eighty fascicules that mentions forty stages of Sage and twelve stages of Sainthoods of *Bodhisattva* corresponding with ten *pāramitās* (perfections).

The *Avataṃsaka sūtra* as a whole presents the doctrine of *Dharmadhātu* or the mutual independence of all things in the universe. According to this, all things in the universe arose simultaneously. In other words, it is the creation of the universe by the universe itself.¹⁸² And the *sūtra* also teaches that everything is a manifestation of the Absolute, hence the one is the many and the many is the one, though everything remains in its own position, distinct and similar from the Absolute.¹⁸³ According to Andrew Skilton¹⁸⁴, *Avataṃsaka sūtra* is highly influential in Chinese Buddhism, forming the basis of the *Hua Yen* school in China and it is popular in countries practising *Mahāyānism*.

The second *sūtra* of this class is the *Lankāvatāra sūtra* that is taught by the Buddha in Srilanka, where he visited at the request of Rāvana, king of Demons, who has his capital there. Its original *Sanskrit* text is now extant in Nepal, it contains ten chapters. The *sūtra* is a simple dialogue between the Buddha and *Bodhisattva* Mahāmati, who set 108 questions to the Buddha. The *sūtra* is concerned with the philosophical matters such as five *dharma*s, three self-nature, *tathāgatagarbha*, *ālayavijñāna*, etc. the *sūtra* was composed some the first or the second century A.D.¹⁸⁵

According to Chinese *Ch'an* school, Bodhidharma¹⁸⁶ (the 28th patriarch of Indian meditative school) brought the *sūtra* to China in 520 A.D. and handed it to Hui Ké (Chinese monk, *Bodhidharma*'s first disciple), who was the second master of Chinese *Ch'an* school. The main doctrine of the *sūtra* is the theory of Mind-Only

¹⁸¹ ACB, p. 106.

¹⁸² KBC, p. 316.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

¹⁸⁴ ACB, p. 106.

¹⁸⁵ SEL, p. 204.

¹⁸⁶ KBC, p. 351.

(*cittamātratā*) that maintains that all things in the universe come from the mind; matter and other elements manifested from mind. Mind, according to the *sūtra*, includes cosmic mind and human mind. The cosmic mind is but *ālayavijñāna* that contains all the seeds of material, from which all external objects are constituted.¹⁸⁷ The *sūtra* affirms that only the cosmic mind or *ālayavijñāna* is real while all things manifested from it are unreal.¹⁸⁸ Human mind is said to be a system of eight consciousnesses, e.g. *ālaya*, *manas*, *manovijñāna* and consciousnesses of five sense organs.¹⁸⁹ After death it is *ālayavijñāna* or subtle body goes to transmigration according to *karma* contained in it. Apart from that, three kinds of knowledge are mentioned in the *sūtra*.¹⁹⁰ And meat-eating is strictly banned, occurs in the 8th chapter of the *sūtra*.¹⁹¹

Besides, the *Sanskrit* text of the *Ārya Saddharma Lankāvatāra Mahāyāna sūtra* or 'Holy entry of the True *Dharma* into *Lankā*' which is the full title of the work, the other four Chinese translations are still extant. The earliest translation was made by Dharmarakṣa between 412-433 A.D., the work was known simply as 'the *Lankā sūtra*' (now lost). The second was Gunabhadra's version in 433 A.D. The third by Bodhiruci in 513 A.D. and the fourth by Siksānanda between 700-704 A.D.¹⁹²

As known, there are 600 *Mahāyāna sūtras* exist in the original *Sanskrit* source, or in Chinese and Tibetan translations. The *sūtras*, which are mentioned above, represent five streams of *Mahāyānic* literature. These five streams of literature are known as the Negative-dialectical literature, the Realistic critical literature, the Symbolic literature, the literature of Self-relation, and the Depictive literature. By the Negative dialectical literature, the whole system of *Prajñā pāramitā sūtras* was taken shape, they deny all attributes and forms of phenomenal objects that are changing from minute to minute. Simultaneously they also reveal the real nature of all things that exist forever. The Realistic critical literature is a special feature of the *Vimalakirtinideśa sūtras*, by which the *sūtras* criticizes the dual actions and thoughts of the Buddha's

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

¹⁸⁸ STTMC, pp. 115-6.

¹⁸⁹ SSLS, p. 189.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 157-9.

¹⁹¹ SEL, p. 206.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

disciples and revealing the non-dualism of their true minds. The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtras* uses the external phenomena to symbolize the characteristic of man. In the *Sukhāvatīvyūha sūtra*, the literature of Self-relation is used for the Buddha's self-relation of pure-land and means to rebirth there. The *Avataṃsaka* and *Lankāvatāra sūtras* use the Depictive literature to describe the reality. The former describes the systems of world in the universe and the mutual independence of all phenomenal objects. A process of religious search made by young man Sudhana and fifty-two stages of *Bodhisattva* are also described in detail in the *sūtra*. The latter describes the cosmic mind and human mind. Simultaneously a process of cultivation and three kinds of knowledge are also described in the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*.

Thus, *Mahāyāna* Buddhism has enriched the Indian literature with its five streams of literature that are inherited and developed by scholars later-on. L.M Joshi maintains that these streams of literature have influenced on the works of Gudapanda, Saṃkara (6th c. A.D.), Rāmaṇuja (11th c. A.D.), Śrī Haṛṣa (12th c. A.D.), Śaṃvi Vivekaṇanda, Mahatma Gaṇḍhi, Śarvepalli Rādhakṛṣṇaṇ, B.R. Aṃbedkar and others.¹⁹³

(ii) Mahāyānic Contribution to Indian philosophy

The Concept of Truths

It is a matter of historical truism that the doctrine of two fold truth, relative truth (*samvṛtisatya*) and the absolute truth (*paramārtha satya*) was firstly expounded by Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Bhavaviveka, Candrakīrti, Śāntideva, Maitreyaṇātha, Asaṅga, Vaṣubandhu, etc. though its seeds be perceivable in the *prajñāparamitā sūtras*.

According to L.M Joshi¹⁹⁴, the classical *Vedānta* schools took this twofold truth theory from *Mahāyāna* as foundations of their philosophy.

The doctrine states that this phenomenal world to be not eternal and its appearance is due to illusion (*māyā*). This thought is very well known to the Heart *sūtra* and *Madhyamikakārikā* as well as to other *Mahāyāna sūtras* and *sāstras*. In the

¹⁹³ JBC, p. 347.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*¹⁹⁵, the world is said to be impermanent and is compared to a house set on fire. The teaching of one vehicle is often understood as means to the extinction of this fire born out of thirst (*tanhā*).

The *Vajracchedika* or Diamond cutter *sūtra*¹⁹⁶ says that the conditioned world is always changing as a current and exists in four moments of production, existence, changing and destruction.

Madhyamikas regard external objects and subjective cognitions to be equally essenceless with the *sūnyatā* as their eternal basis. Nāgārjuna I used the word *sūnyatā* for both, relative and absolute truths. According to *Madhyamikas*, all things in the world are relative and conditional but they are depended on the absolute *sūnyatā*.¹⁹⁷

Yogācāras recognize the reality of external objects, which are constituted by consciousness (the seeds of phenomena), are impermanent. According to them, only *ālayvijñāna* is real and eternal but all things manifested from it are transient.¹⁹⁸

Though all conditioned things are impermanent and destructive, their nature exists forever. *Madhyamikas* think that the absolute *sūnyatā* or self-nature as the common source of all things. It is beyond any discrimination and discussion. The Heart *sūtra*¹⁹⁹ affirms that the Absolute is not created, not annihilated, not pure, not impure, not increasing and not decreasing, even no wisdom and not attainment of *Nirvāna*.

On the basis of the Heart *sūtra*, Nāgārjuna I (80-120 CAD), who developed the idea of *Madhyamika* school in India, describes the absolute *sūnyatā* by means of eightfold negation as follows:

“It is neither origination nor cessation,
Neither permanence nor impermanence,

¹⁹⁵ BTLS, pp. 85-91.

¹⁹⁶ SBS, p. 134.

¹⁹⁷ SST, p. 37.

¹⁹⁸ BYB, p. 108.

¹⁹⁹ SBS, pp. 134-5.

Neither unity nor diversity,
Neither coming in nor going out”²⁰⁰

The absolute *sūnyatā* or self-nature, according to Nāgārjuna, is free from dualism and imperfection. The opposite pairs of category as above can not describe the absolute. It is the subtle reality that nothing can destroy it; death does not touch it nor vice dissolve it. It is free from craving (*tanhā*), from evil, from fear and it is embraced in all.²⁰¹ It is not created by material elements, it is a self-existent and self-complete entity and there is nothing outside it to exist and from which all things spring up.²⁰² All phenomenal things are manifestations of it, ceases in it and returns to it after their destructions. *Sūnyatā* or Absolute is the real nature of all existences.

The Absolute, moreover, is the self-nature of man; it does not change while his body changes. It is free from good or bad while the body is good or bad. It is not to be blind or death while the body is blind or dead.²⁰³ The real-nature is immortal and self-bright and self-demonstrated. It exists forever and it is a subject of all experiences.

Yogācāras consider the Absolute as the nature of *tathāgatagarbha*, (the pure aspect of *ālayavijñāna*) that is foundation of one’s cognition and it is also the real essence of external objects. According to them, nothing in the universe is permanent except their real nature. One’s eight consciousnesses are also manifested from the nature of *ālayavijñāna*. In the Absolute, there is nothing to move, nothing to cultivate and to attain because it is always in the state of purity and brightness.²⁰⁴

The concept of Absolute of *Mahāyāna* influenced the thought of Gaudapāda, who made an attempt to harmonize *Mahāyāna* philosophy with that of *Non-dualistic Vedānta*.

In the *Āgama sūtra*, Gaudapāda makes an endeavour to synthesize and bring about a concord between *Mahāyāna* Buddhism and *Advaita Vedānta*. By this concord,

²⁰⁰ KBC, p. 182.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² RIP₁, p. 152.

²⁰³ RPU, p. 256.

²⁰⁴ SSLS, p. 193.

the *Mahāyānic* philosophical thought seems to have crept into *Vedānta* and its result is found in *Non-dualistic Vedānta* of Samkara. It would be historically correct to say that the *Samkara Vedānta* has been influenced by the *Madhyamika* thought, and the link is preserved in the *Āgama sūtra* of Gaudapāda. Gopinātha Kavirāja²⁰⁵ rightly maintains that the *Madhyamikakārikā* of Nāgārjuna has influenced the thought of the *Gaudapādakārikās*.

The Concept of Ātman and Jīva

Ātman: The *ātman* is originally the term of the *Upanisads* but in *Mahāyāna* doctrine, this term is replaced by other terms such as *prajñā*, *sūnyatā*, self-nature, Buddha-nature, *tathatā*, absolute *Nirvāna*, true-mind, the nature of *tathāgatagarbha*, etc. *Ātman* or Buddha-nature or self-nature is known as substratum of all experiences, it is absolute nature of man.²⁰⁶ *Hīnayānists* deny *ātman* since they only mention the relative truth; *ātman* is not found in any separate parts of transient things. For example, when the pole, axle, wheel, frame-work, spokes of the wheel are separated, the chariot is not seen but when they are combined, the chariot is seen.²⁰⁷ *Ātman* or self-nature is not necessarily the same as egoism, even when selfishness or egoism is destroyed, the self-nature remains. *Hīnayānists* always think about the destruction of self, in reality, the self that they try to destroy is the self-attachment to external object; it is not self-nature of all things. It is this self-attachment that makes them to suffer. The real-self or *ātman* can not be destroyed. If the self-nature or *ātman* were destroyed, there would not have any existence. Owing to *ātman* or self-nature, everything exists and acts in orderly/manner. Owing to *ātman* or real-self, eyes, ears, tongue, nose, body and mind perform their functions. The affirmation of self-nature or *ātman* in all things is the specific property of *Mahāyāna*. To translate the term *ātman* always by ego or self may be wrong. The theories of ego and non-self in the *Hīnayāna* doctrine only belong to ethics, they are not the metaphysical concepts. The *ātman* is known as *sūnyatā* in the *Madhyamikakārikā*. This *sāstra* holds that *sūnyatā* is absolute, the basis of all existences. According to Nāgārjuna I, *ātman* or *sūnyatā* is wonderous and bright. If

²⁰⁵ MSED, p. 408.

²⁰⁶ JBC, p. 340.

²⁰⁷ RIP₁, p. 302.

one tries to think about it or to describe it by any language, he is like trying to catch space with his hand because space can not be caught or touched by him.

The *Lankāvatāra sūtra*²⁰⁸ identifies *ātman* or real-nature with *Dharmakāya*, the basis of all existences from which all things spring up, exist and to be destroyed. It is also the real body of the Buddha, his *sambogakāya* and *nirmānakāya* are the manifestations of it. *Dharmakāya* is devoid of all marks and inexpressible, it is neither spirit nor material.

Jīva: *Jīva* or soul is also the term used in the *Upaniṣads*. In Buddhism, it is called by many names such as consciousness, *patisaṇḍhi vijñāna*, *pudgala*, *gandhava*, etc. these terms are used for the empirical self that is the governor of body, sense organs, mind and intellect.²⁰⁹ It is neither female nor male, nor yet is the neuter. Whatever body it takes to itself by that it holds. Owing to past *karma* it assumes successively various forms in various conditions. It is without beginning and without end; it is the knower, enjoyer, thinker and doer of the good or bad *karma* and experiences the result of *karma*. It is unborn, conscious, and eternal, it does not perish while its body dies.²¹⁰ When a man dies, whose body is burnt, the material elements of his body return back to the four elements in the universe and he remains only his soul or *gandhava*.²¹¹

According to the *Ksitigarbha sūtra*²¹², after death, one's *gandhava* (soul) is free from his body and lives continuously for forty nine days; it will then go to rebirth according to its past *karma* except the very evil and the very good men. The very evil man falls into the hells immediately after death and the very good man is reborn into the heavenly worlds just after death.

The *Upaniṣad*²¹³ says that the soul is led by *karma* into the mother's womb there it connects with the father's self that was left there, then a new fetus to be taken shape and a new life is continued. After throwing this body again, it also get an

²⁰⁸ SSLs, pp. 142-5.

²⁰⁹ SIP₁, p. 17.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²¹¹ RPU, p. 313.

²¹² TSBKV, p. 9.

²¹³ RPU, pp. 324-9.

appropriate body in accordance with its *karma*.²¹⁴ When the thirst of lust is rooted out from one's mind, his soul becomes one with his *ātman* or self-nature and the immortality is attained.

The Difference between Ātman and Soul

There is the difference of *ātman* (self-nature) and soul (consciousness). As mentioned above, the consciousness (soul) is the manifestation from self-nature (*ātman*). In other words, self-nature is the substratum of consciousness. The self-nature and consciousness exist in the same body but the self-nature is the eternal reality while consciousness comes from death to deaths and experiences the pleasant or painful fruits of its past *karma* and feels happiness or misery.

The self-nature is the inner essence of all living beings. It is like an indifferent spectator without affected by joy and sorrow. The self-nature and consciousness are unborn and eternal. In the state of liberation, consciousness (soul) is divested its name and form and attains the immortality and united with the self-nature as rivers having different forms and names, merge in the sea losing their names and forms. As water poured into water, milk poured into milk become one without differentiation, even so consciousness and self-nature become one in the liberated state of man.

The Concept of World and Māyā

World: The world according to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*²¹⁵ is real though it has its imperfect manifestations. The *Upanisads*²¹⁶ hold that God himself created the world with his *māyā* (power). But *Mahāyānists* deny this concept and maintain that it is creation of the universe by the universe itself. And everything in the universe is interdependent. An entity exists by the attraction of other entities and the interdependent is lengthened to the inexhaustible space.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 597.

²¹⁵ BTLS, p. 70.

²¹⁶ RPU, pp. 625, 863...

²¹⁷ KBC, p. 316.

It is interesting to say that the concept of universe in *Hīnayāna* doctrine is very poor. In the *Aggivacchagotta*²¹⁸ and the *Cūlamalunkya sūttas*²¹⁹, the Buddha's disciples ask him the important questions concerning philosophy as follows: The world is eternal or the world is not eternal? The world is an ending thing or the world is not an ending thing? The life-principle is the same as the body or the life-principle is one thing and the body another? *Tathāgata* is after dying or *Tathāgata* is not after dying? The *Tathāgata* both is and is not after dying or the *Tathāgata* neither is nor is not after dying? These questions are not answered by the Buddha in the *Hīnayāna* doctrine whereas these metaphysical problems are explained clearly in the *Mahāyāna* teachings.

In the *Avatamsaka sūtra*, in sixty fascicles²²⁰, the Buddha asserts that there are innumerable systems of the world in the endless space. All phenomenal things in the universe are existing due to the interaction between them, and they always have mutual attractions.²²¹ The idea of the *sūtra* is adopted by modern scientists, who have invented astronomical telescopes and used them for exploration of universe. As a result, they have seen clearly the systems of sun in the space.²²² So they ask themselves that, about 2500 years ago, how could the Buddha see the whole universe clearly while humankind has not yet made any scientific instrument for exploration of universe?

About 500 years after the Buddha, Jesus, the founder of Christianity, has taught in the Old Testament²²³: "...The sun goes round the earth. The earth is centre of universe and it is motionless... The earth is as square as the face of a table and sky is as round as the dish-cover that covered up the table...". Jesus' idea has been denied by modern scientists. Among them, Galileo²²⁴, German scientist, in seventeenth century A.D. (1610-1642 A.D.), who has invented the telescope and used it for his discovery, saw countless other worlds in this system of sun in which thousands celestial bodies are active. And he re-declared that earth goes round the sun and receives light from the

²¹⁸ MLS, pp. 162-7.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 97-101.

²²⁰ FOST, Vol. 1, pp. 5-20ff.

²²¹ KBC, p. 316.

²²² BLG, pp. 23-34.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

sun. The moon does go round the earth; the earth is a planet like other planets and not the centre of the universe because the entire universe is full of planets, etc...²²⁵

Galileo's statements seem to be hostile to the *Bible*. So he was condemned to the stake by Inquisition of Vatican Catholic church in 1642.²²⁶

In our time, cosmonauts with their spaceships landed on the moon as well as on the venus, mars and Jupiter belonging to this system of sun and they themselves see the immense universe with their own eyes. Therefore what is taught by the Buddha in the *Avataṃsaka* and *Sukhāvatīvyūha sūtras* are verified by modern cosmic science. Thus, the cosmic conception of *Mahāyānism* not only has enriched the Indian cosmic science but it is also a great contribution to human civilization.

Māyā: *Māyā* has three meanings, *shakti* (God's power), *avidyā* (ignorance) and *ānatta* (impermanence).

Shakti or God's power is identified with the creative power of *ālayavijñāna* by *Yogācāra* school.²²⁷ According to this, *ālayavijñāna* is the absolute totality, originality, and creativity of universe, unconditioned itself by time and space, which are modes of existence of the concrete and empirical phenomena. The external objects are created by the seeds of material contained in *ālayavijñāna*, out of which they exist and into which they are destroyed.²²⁸ God is, according to *Mahāyānist*, the imagination of thought; he was not a creator of the universe. If he was the sole cause, whether the God was Mahādeva, Vāsudeva or others, whether spirit or matter, owing to the simple fact of the existence of such a primordial cause, the world would have been created in its totality at once and at the same time. For it can not be admitted that there should be a cause without an effect, but successively some come from wombs, some from eggs, some from the wet places, some from transformation of the other species. Hence, a conclusion is made that the universe created by a series of cause and conditions and

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-8.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

²²⁷ RIP₁, p. 631.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

God is only a personalization of the creative power of the universe or *ālayavijñāna*. God is not the sole cause of all.

The second meaning of *māyā* is impermanence of the inner and outer worlds. In the phenomenal field, one's thought always changes and is attached to external objects by which the sufferings arise. Only after attaining *Arhatship*, his stream of thought just becomes pure and real happiness is attained.²²⁹

The external world is said to be created by a series of cause and conditions so it is not permanent. Change is the pervading feature of the material world; changing things imply non-existence at the beginning and non-existence at the end. The Heart *sūtra* declares that the world, which is made by five aggregates, is emptiness. In reality, there is the drying up of the great oceans, the falling away of the mountain peaks, the deviation of the fixed pole-star, the submergence of earth, the departure of men from their station, etc. From the sky, earth to the gnats, mosquitoes and ants all must die, the grass and the tree that grow will decay.

The last meaning of *Māyā* is ignorance. Ignorance, according to *Mahāyānists*, is a dark state of mind by which one can not know the essence of man and world; due to it attaches to worldly things one makes many bad actions that lead him to rebirth. Though *Mahāyānists* agree with *Hīnayānic* doctrine that ignorance is the root of rebirth, *Mahāyānists* do not advocate to destroy ignorance because it is a formless entity and it is not found in anywhere. So Zen Master Hsuan Chiao, a Chinese monk in the sixth century A.D., declares that: "The more having destruction of ignorance, the more causing the sickness (of self attachment) increases".²³⁰ The *Vimalakīrtinideśa sūtra*²³¹ also says that: "desire, hatred, and ignorance are the seeds of *Tathāgata*". It is said thus because ignorance and enlightenment are two sides of an entity. If there were no ignorance, certainly there would not be enlightenment. When wisdom comes, ignorance itself disappears, no need to destroy it by any ways.

²²⁹ STTMC, pp. 87-8.

²³⁰ LCZ3, p. 116.

²³¹ RHV, p. 65.

The Concept of Bondage and Liberation

According to *Mahāyānists*, the world is really sinfulness, all things in the world do not make one to become bondage, and really they are manifestations of thusness. One is, nevertheless, bound to external world because he does not abide in his real-nature, his thinking follows external objects when his sense organs get in contact with them. So his mind, which is originally pure, suddenly gets pleasure with the beautiful and discontent with the ugly, by which he becomes ignorant and he himself is tied by the strings of defilement. It is like the silk-worms, which are co-crooning, tie themselves with the silk-threads. So long as one's mind remains attached to the external world, is bound to the endless circle of transmigration (*samsāra*). The principle, which governs the spiritual world, is *karma* that leads man from a life to lives. If he does not break it with his wisdom and energy, he never attains the freedom from bondage.

There are two forms of liberation mentioned in the *Hinayāna* teachings, e.g. *Upadhiśesa Nirvāna* and *Anupadhiśesa Nirvāna*²³², the former is the liberation during the life and the latter is the liberation after death. Two forms of liberation of *Hinayāna* seems to be copied from the *jīvan mukti* and *videha mukti* in the *Upaniṣadic* doctrines.²³³ The explanations of *jīvan mukti* and *videha mukti* in the *Upaniṣads* are the same with that of the *Upadhiśesa Nirvāna* and *Anupadhiśesa Nirvāna* in *Hinayāna* doctrines. *Mahāyānists* consider these two liberations as the partial liberation; the complete liberation is the union between one's soul or consciousness with his real-nature.²³⁴

The concept of liberation is different from *Hinayāna* and *Mahāyāna*. When an *Arhat* enters into *Nirvāna*, he enjoys happiness there and he never gets rebirth in the suffering world; whereas a *Mahāyāna Bodhisattva* needs not get *Nirvāna* as he always works for the sake of others. And to him, there is no difference between *samsāra* and *Nirvāna*. Wherever he lives and works, that place is his *Nirvāna*. According to

²³² RIP₁, p. 447.

²³³ RPU, p. 121.

²³⁴ BTLS, p. 200.

Mahāyānists, the liberation is obtained just on the earth if one acquires intuition and lives up to his real-nature.

The concept of liberation of *Mahāyānism* was inherited and developed by Samkara, the great master of *Advaita Vedānta* school (9th c. A.D.). He recognizes the complete liberation and it is obtained on earth. According to him, the person, who acquires intuition of Absolute, becomes the liberator here and now.²³⁵

The means to Liberation

According to the *Lankāvatāra*²³⁶ and *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*²³⁷ sūtras, the means to liberation consists of *prajñā* (wisdom), *bhakti* (devotion), and *ānābhogacaryā* (duty or purposeless actions).

The wisdom (*prajñā*) is considered as a prerequisite condition leading to liberation, without which the performances of duty and devotion will easily fall into the superstition and egoism. In *Hīnayāna* doctrine, the wisdom is especially emphasized, without mentions of the duty and devotion. There are three kinds of wisdom mentions in the *Hīnayāna* doctrine, e.g. heard wisdom, intellectual wisdom and experiential wisdom. These wisdom can destroy the self-attachment and attains non-rebirth in the suffering worlds, the *dharma*-attachment cannot be rooted out from one's mind by these wisdom.²³⁸ *Mahāyānists* maintain that the intuitive wisdom is a bright state of mind in which everything is reflected.²³⁹ There are four kinds of wisdom²⁴⁰ mentioned in *Yogācāra* doctrine. *Yogācāras* hold that when one acquires self-realization of his original enlightenment, his five previous consciousness (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching consciousness) become the perfecting wisdom that can perceive all things as they are. His *manovijñāna* becomes the profound observing wisdom that can see the essence of all things. His *manas* becomes the wisdom of equality that is free from discriminations. And his *ālayavijñāna* becomes the great

²³⁵ SIP₁, p. 584.

²³⁶ SSLs, pp. 202-5.

²³⁷ BTLS, pp. 306-11.

²³⁸ SST, pp. 36-7.

²³⁹ LCZ₃, p. 100.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

mirror wisdom, where all things are clearly reflected. By this wisdom, the Buddha has seen everything in the universe and known what happens in one's mind clearly.

Devotion (*bhakti*) is one of the special features of *Mahāyānism*, distinguishing itself with other Buddhist sects. Devotion is said to generate knowledge that can unify one's mind with the absolute *sūnyatā* through the Other power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of Buddhas that issue from their original vows (*praṇidhāna*). Through devotion, the devotee expresses his eager and sincere heart to the Buddha and *Bodhisattva*. Through devotion, the devotee can root out his selfishness, pride and desire from his mind.

There are two kinds devotion mentioned in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra*, the material offering and moral offering.²⁴¹ The former is the offering of flowers, songs, incenses, fruits and rice to the Buddha's statues. The latter is the practice of ethics, meditation and wisdom as well as working for the happiness of others.

When the devotee offers a flower or a song or a bowl of food to the Buddha's statue, he not only prays the Buddha to bestow blessing on him but he also develops his faith to the Buddha and *Bodhisattvas*, by which he can control himself from evil thoughts and actions. The *Lankāvatāra sūtra*²⁴² asserts that the material offering is only equal to 1/16th of moral offering.

Purposeless action (*ānābhogacārya*) is an impartial service of *Bodhisattva* towards all living beings. Though *Mahāyāna Bodhisattva* performs all duties for happiness of others, he never asks for gratitude or reward. He always seeks proper opportunities to serve others. Nothing can make him happier than the active service for the sake of others as their happiness is also his own happiness. The doctrine of purposeless action is built on the bases of love, kindness, and compassion. In other word, the *Bodhisattva*'s compassion is developed highly only when he works for the sake of others. By serving all living beings, the *Bodhisattva* can attain the highest enlightenment (Buddhahood). If there were no living beings, the *Bodhisattva* would not have a chance to practise the *Bodhisattva* path and the Buddhahood would never come to him.

²⁴¹ SSLf, pp. 272-4.

²⁴² SSLs, p. 232.

The means to liberation of *Mahāyāna* as above influence the thought of *Viśiātādvaita Vedānta* school (1027 CAD) and Jainism. Rāmānuja²⁴³, the founder of the school, asserts that the performance of duty (*karma*), devotion (*bhakti*), and knowledge (*jñāna*) lead to liberation. On the contrary, Mahāvira²⁴⁴, the founder of Jainism, advocates that the liberation is the result of performing right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. According to Mahavira, devotion to an *Arhat* or *Siddhi* produces beneficial *karma* leading to the celestial happiness; it does not liberate the soul from *karmic* matter.

(iii) Mahāyānic Contribution to Indian Psychology

Psychology is a science that studies mind (*citta*), the functions of mind (*caittas*) the sickness of mind and reduction of mind. Mind, according to Buddhism, is a system of six consciousness or a system of eight consciousness (*viññāna*).²⁴⁵ There are two psychological distinctions in the *Theravādin* doctrine.²⁴⁶ The former is an analysis of five aggregates (*rūpa*, *vedanā*, *samjñā*, *samskāras*, and *viññāna*). The latter is a discrimination of six consciousnesses (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactual and mental consciousnesses).

Of five aggregates, *rūpa* or material part constitutes the body of four elements as well as external world. *Nāma* or mind is the spiritual or subtle part that consists of feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*samjñā*), mental dispositions (*samskāra*), and intelligence or reason (*viññāna*), these four principles constitute the inner world. S. Radhakrishnan²⁴⁷ maintains that there is the difference between the outer and the inner, the subjective and objective. According to him, subjective perceives the outer world or external objects and on the contrary, the outer world or external objects are the immediate objects of perception, thought or understanding. Man, according to *Theravādas* is a combination of material (*rūpa*) and mind (*nāma*) or five aggregates. His body is created by four material elements (earth, water, air, fire). His mind is

²⁴³ SIP₁, p. 36.

²⁴⁴ SIP₂, pp. 259-61.

²⁴⁵ SSLs, p. 179.

²⁴⁶ RIP₁, p. 401.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

constituted by four mental elements (feeling, perception, mental disposition, and reason). Both his body and mind are changing as a current. In his psycho-physical organism, the part, which is relatively stable, is body; the unstable state is mind. Feeling (*vedanā*) is the sorrow, happy and neuter states of mind. When sense organs come in contact with their objects, his mind arises a good or bad feeling. The neuter feeling arises when sense organs come in contact with their objects that are neither beautiful nor the ugly. Mahāthera Narada²⁴⁸ holds that feeling produces craving (*tanhā*), the cause of *samsāra*. Perception (*samjñā*) is the recognition of the general relations as well as the perception of all kinds, sensuous and mental. The object of cognition may be either an object of sense or of thought. Samskāra includes a miscellaneous host of tendencies, intellectual, affectional, volitional and has its specific functional synthesis. Consciousness (*viññāna*) is intelligence that comprehends abstract elements. S. Radhakrishnan²⁴⁹ holds that consciousness (*viññāna*) is not conditioned by sense contact, while feeling, perception and disposition are conditioned.

Apart from the analysis of five aggregates, *Theravāda* analyses one's mind into six consciousnesses: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactual and mental consciousnesses. These six consciousnesses have their objects (colour, sound, smell, taste, touch and *dharma* or images of external objects engraved upon one's sub consciousness). When eyes contact the colours, the visual consciousness arises, the image of objects is deposited into mental consciousness and its analysis yields affection and volition. Likewise, the remaining pairs such as ears and sounds, tongue and tastes, nose and smells are explained. It is the contact of sense organs gives rise to a series of feeling, perception, thought, will, concentration, and attention.

As mentioned above, *Therevāda* only analyses one's mind into six consciousnesses and their functions. *Manas*, the agency produces affection and will and *ālaya*, the subtle body, which contains all habits, both have not yet been discussed. Certainly the *Theravādin* psychology must be supplemented by *Mahāyānic* psychology later on. It means that *manas* and *ālayaviññāna* must be added into the psychology of *Theravāda* in order to complete a system of consciousness.

²⁴⁸ NBT, p. 246.

²⁴⁹ RIP₁, p. 401.

The *Vaibhāsika* school (one of *Hinayāna* schools) made a distinction between the inner world of ideas and outer world of objects.²⁵⁰ According to *Vaibhāsikas*, the external world belongs to material world that is known as mountains, rivers, sky, stars, earth, trees, plants, etc. The inner world consists of mind (*citta*) and the functions of mind (*caittas*). Mind, according to *Vaibhāsikas*, is also made by six consciousnesses (*viññāna*), e.g. visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactual, and mental consciousnesses.

S. Radhakrishnan²⁵¹ holds that mind (*citta*) is conscious of objects and *caittas* are that which arise when mind perceives its objects. The external world is open for perception and if there is no perception, there can be no inference.

The causal relation between cognition and objects is specially paid attention to. The object cognition is of two kinds, the perceived and the inferred, the sensible and the cognizable.²⁵² *Vaibhāsikas* maintain that cognition or perception is produced by objects, the object is cause and cognition is effect. According to them, the perceiver is conscious and substratum of consciousness is permanent.²⁵³

Six sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mental organ) have their respective objects. For example, eyes can perceive colours, it can not perceive sounds whereas ears can perceive sounds without perceiving colours or smells, etc. After grasping the external objects, mind arouses sense organs and excites consciousness. Sense organs, which contact objects, are material and each organ has two parts, the principal and the auxiliary.²⁵⁴ In the case of sight, the optic nerve is the principle and eye-ball is the auxiliary though eye contacts with forms. When an object, ugly or beautiful, is perceived, its data is deposited into the sub-consciousness and after the data is analysed by mental consciousness, perception and feeling arise. Like *Theravāda*, *Vaibhāsika* also considers the sixth consciousness as mind. *Manas* and *ālaya* are not mentioned in the *Vaibhāsika* doctrine. And *Vaibhāsika* agree with

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 614.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 618.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 619.

Theravāda that sense organs can not discriminate their objects but only consciousnesses (*vijñāna*) can do. *Citta*, according to Vasubandhu I²⁵⁵, is one with mind, consciousness or discrimination.

The *Sautrāntika* psychology is more profound than the psychologies of *Theravāda* and *Vaibhāsika*. It agrees with *Theravāda* that perception is produced by the external object; if there is no external object, there is not perception.²⁵⁶

Sautrāntikas maintain that present cognition can not perceive past objects, they are only inferred from their cognitions and the forms of object are inferred from those of their cognitions. The result of cognitions are the copies or representations of their objects. Just as the beauty of a rose is inferred from a beautiful rose and affection arises from cognized moments. So the knowable objects are inferred from the form of cognition and cognitions are diversified by their objects. Different external objects produce different cognitions and impress their forms of cognitions. The internal forms of cognitions are representations of the external forms of object. Without external objects, the diversity of cognition will not take shape. The *Sautrāntikas* think that the stream of subject-cognitions is uniformly present in all times but the object-cognitions appear and disappear at certain times. According to *Sautrāntikas*, knowledge arises on the basis of four conditions, that is, data, suggestion, medium, and dominant organs.²⁵⁷ For example, from a rose seen outside, the form of rose arises in the understanding; the manifestation is styled a cognition. From suggestion, a revival of old knowledge of rose takes shape and the restriction to the apprehension of that rose arises from the medium. Eye is the dominant organ for perceiving that rose. Enough three conditions (light, distance, and object) eye can perceive.

Like *Theravāda* and *Vaibhāsika*, *Sautrāntika* also considers the sixth consciousness as mind; *manas* and *ālayavijñāna* are not mentioned in their psychologies.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ SIP₂, p. 352.

²⁵⁷ RIP₁, p. 622.

It is interesting to say that *Hinayāna* schools do not care to present deeply a system of psychology because their main interest is ethical.

The *Upaniṣadic* psychology also consists of visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactual, mental consciousness and *manas*.²⁵⁸

The *Upaniṣadic* psychology is more adequate than *Hinayāna* ones because the *Upaniṣadic* thinkers have seen the important role of *manas* in the system of consciousness. But they faulted here as they consider *manas* as mind. In reality, *manas* is not mind if it is separated from system of consciousness. Mind, according to the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*²⁵⁹, is a system of consciousnesses. On other hand, the *Upaniṣadic* thinkers knew the role of *ālayavijñāna* or *Hiranyagarbha*²⁶⁰ in the creation of universe but they did not know its important role in the whole system of consciousness. It is *ālayavijñāna* is a subtle body that contains all habits and defilements. And after death, it is *ālayavijñāna* comes to transmigration according to the seeds of *karma* contained in it.²⁶¹

Mahāyānic psychology is said to be the most complete system as it mentions enough eight consciousnesses (*ālayavijñāna*, *manas*, *manovijñāna*, and five sense consciousnesses).²⁶² According to *Yogācāras*, *ālayavijñāna* is originally free from attachments and defilements but it is the operation of *manas*, a system of consciousness is taken shape and polluted. *Ālayavijñāna*, on the other hand, is polluted by *manas* that produces affection and will, it is these habits made the waves on the face of *ālaya* ocean that stirs up and rolls on dancing without interruption.²⁶³ *Manas*, according to Suzuki²⁶⁴, is born from *ālayavijñāna* and it is also a discriminating agency by which the homogeneous, undifferentiated *citta* is divided into two parts, the one as the seer and the other as the seen, the one as the grasping ego and the other as an object

²⁵⁸ RPU, p. 661.

²⁵⁹ SSLs, p. 179.

²⁶⁰ RPU, p. 625.

²⁶¹ BYB, p. 96.

²⁶² SSLs, p. 248.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-1.

grasped. And *manas* is not only an intellective principle but also a co-native one. When six sense organs contact their objects, *manas* edges itself between *ālayavijñāna* and consciousness and causing them to attach firmly to their external objects and it leads to thirst, wish, and urges for pleasures. One's sorrow, grief, suffering, and lamentation start nowhere else but *manas* and *manovijñāna*, the root of intellection and conation. According to *Lankāvatāra sūtra*²⁶⁵, *manas* is not only a discriminating intelligence but also an agency of affection and will.

The function of *manas* is essentially to reflect upon *ālaya* and to create discriminations between subject and object from the pure oneness of *ālaya*. The habits accumulated in *ālaya* are now divided into dualities of all forms and all kinds. In its activities, *manas* is always joined with *manovijñāna* to create desires based upon its wrong judgments such as when it perceives the reality of an ego substance and becomes attached to it as the ultimate truth. *Manas* is of four kinds of defilement always accompany it. Four kinds of defilement, which always accompany *manas*, are "ignorance about self", "belief in self", "pride in self" and "love in self".²⁶⁶ When *manas* is purified, the whole system of consciousness becomes pure.

Manovijñāna is synonymous with mental consciousness (the sixth consciousness) in the *Hīnayāna* psychology. *Manovijñāna* is said to discriminate *dharma*. It means that *manovijñāna* always analyses data of external objects that have been brought into sub-consciousness by five sense consciousnesses.

Tathāgatagarbha is the pure aspect of *ālayavijñāna*, which is pure, eternal and unmodifiable. The nature of *Tathāgatagarbha* is not only the substratum of *ālayavijñāna* but it also the basis of the whole system of consciousnesses. It is free from ignorance and attachment but when *ālayavijñāna* is disturbed by *manas*, *tathāgatagarbha* is covered by all habits and defilements.²⁶⁷ The nature of *tathāgatagarbha* is equivalent with *ātman* in the *Upaniṣads*; it always lives in suchness; it is the absolute or real nature of man. The *Lankāvatāra sūtra* asserts that if

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ STTMC, p. 90.

²⁶⁷ SSLs, p. 193.

no existence of real nature, there would be no Arhat, no sufferings, no cessation of suffering, no rebirth, no *karma*, no meditation, no liberation.²⁶⁸

Apart from that, *Yogācāra* recognizes three degrees of knowledge: sensual knowledge (*parikalpita*), logic knowledge (*paratantra*) and absolute knowledge (*pariniṣpama*).

Sensual knowledge gives the false attribution of an imaginary idea to an object produced by its cause and conditions. The sensual knowledge exists only in one's imagination and does not correspond to reality. For example, at night, one steps on a rope and images it as a snake and gets frightened. Logic knowledge (*paratantra*) is also a relative knowledge. It is the correct knowledge of objects produced by cause and conditions. On seeing the rope that he stepped on last time, now he bends down and examined it carefully, he knows it is not a snake, it is a rope that is made by many small ramie fibers, but he does not know the real nature of the rope. The absolute knowledge (*pariniṣpana*) is the highest knowledge or intuition by which he can know the nature of the rope as well as of all things.

Generally speaking, the *Hīnayāna* psychology is limited in the analysis of six consciousness. *Hīnayānists* consider mental consciousness (the sixth *viññāna*) as mind; *manas* and *ālayaviññāna*, two most important components of a system of consciousness are still lacking. Though the *Upaniṣadic* psychology mentions *manas* in its psychological system, it continues to consider *manas* as mind. In short, *Hīnayānists* and the *Upaniṣadic* thinkers have a big mistake in their psychologies because they did not mention *manas* and *ālayaviññāna*. Whereas *Mahāyāna* psychology gives enough a system of eight consciousnesses- *ālayaviññāna*, *manas*, *manovijñāna*, and five sense consciousnesses. And *Mahāyānists* maintain that mind is a system of eight consciousnesses that is always gone on without a hitch and it is always polluted by *manas*. When *manas* are purified, the whole system of consciousness becomes pure and the Absolute is attained.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

Thus, *Mahāyāna* psychology has already contributed to Indian psychology. It not only supplements *manas* and *ālayavijñāna* into *Hīnayāna* psychology but also re-addresses the role of *ālayavijñāna* in the *Upaniṣadic* psychology in order to complete a system of modern Indian psychology.

Many scholars have paid attention to the great psychological importance of consciousness (*vijñāna*) in the *Vijñāptimatrataraśāstra* of Vasubandhu that opens a new horizon for some modern scholars, who studies the universe and man. This work speaks of the truth as an infinite and limitless mass of consciousness. This statement reminds us of the psychology found in some *Pūranas* (the works of Hinduism).

(iv) Mahāyānic Contribution to Indian Ethics

Mahāyānic contribution to Indian ethics is manifested through four main heads, that is, the caste and gender equality, vegetarian sacrifices, impartial service of *Bodhisattva* and attainment of the Absolute.

Caste and Gender Equality

Special aspect of *Mahāyānic* contribution to ancient Indian ethics is based on the foundation of social harmony and racial integration on a national scale.

As known in history, the ruling class often used religion for maintaining the social order based on castes (*varna*). The caste division was further emphasized under the influence of *Vaiṣṇavism* and *Śaivism*. A passage of the *Mahābhārata*²⁶⁹ tells that the *sūdra* can achieve salvation only through service to the twice-born and devotion to gods. It is also especially emphasized in the *Epic* and *Pūranas*, that *sūdra* can obtain *Brahmanhood* in the next life through good conduct.²⁷⁰

Seemingly, the caste division of *Brahmanism* is based on the theory of *karma*. But *karma*, in fact, concerns with the goodness, badness, happiness or sorrow of a man; it does not take part in caste system of a society. Caste division certainly derives

²⁶⁹ DAI, p. 106.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

from ignorance and greed of the ruling class that divided community of nation into separate castes in order to dominate effectively and easily.

Romila Thapar²⁷¹ says that, in the time from the first to the sixth century A.D., rate of interest was defined by regulations according to caste of person to whom money was lent, with the upper classes paying a small rate than the lower. It would have made more difficult for the lower and economically poorer castes to pay debts or to finance commercial ventures and it would be far easier for the upper castes to invest in trade.

Of disparity of wealth within society, D.N. Jha²⁷² indicates that the upper castes were very rich whereas the common people, slaves and labourers seem to have coveted this wealth. It is the rise of a new wealthy class in the villages and towns which caused economic inequalities.

Caste distinctions became fierce and rigid in the time of Guptas. It means that caste distinctions and caste rigidity became more prevalent than ever before. A *Pūranic* text²⁷³, compiled in Gupta time, associates the four colours, white, red, yellow and black, with *Brahman*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Sūdra* respectively. It shows the relative status of the four orders. According to the book, *Brahmana* belongs to the highest caste who should not accept food from a *Sūdra* because it reduces his spiritual strength. Three remaining castes were *Kshatriya*, *Vaisya*, and *Sūdra*; specially *Sūdra* must serve the three above mentioned castes.

On other hand, in ancient India, women were also slighted too much. They became an item of property and came to live in the perpetual tutelage of men.²⁷⁴ D.N. Jha²⁷⁵ indicates that there was a ban among the *Shakyas* on the marriage of a girl even with a king of supposedly low status nor was interlining between individuals born of unequal births permitted.

²⁷¹ RPHEI, p. 252.

²⁷² DAI, p. 31.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-5.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Seemingly, the *Hinayānic* doctrine²⁷⁶ has accepted the caste system of *Brahmanism*. In a Buddhist birth story, it is claimed that the Buddhas was born only in the two higher castes and never as a *Vaishya* or *Sūdra*. Sometimes *Hinayānists* complain caste system of *Brahmanical* religion, but they never wages any powerful struggle against caste distinction and untouchable and seems to have recognized the phenomenon of untouchable which originated in the post *Vedic* period and remains to this day an appalling feature of Indian social life.

Apart from that, *Mahāyānists* condemn *Hinayānic* doctrine that slights the value of women since it considers women to have five impossibilities. It means that women can not become Buddhas, can not become the *Brahma* heavenly kings, *Sakra* kings, *Mara* kings, and the Wheel turning holy kings.²⁷⁷

Mahāyānists consider caste division as non-ethical because all men have the power to become perfect. As a result, all members of society were admitted into the monastic order and then they were treated equally in the true *Dharma*.²⁷⁸

The *Mahāyānic* theory of social harmony has gradually sabotaged the standpoint of the *Brahmanical* tradition which zealously guarded the myth of the divine origin of four castes and their duties. Though *Mahāyānists* have not continuously criticized the theory of caste and have not ridiculed the false claims to superiority based on birth (*Jāti*) and colours, they have opened the doors to higher religious life and the highest goal for those who seek for enlightenment without exclusion of lower castes of society.

L.M. Joshi²⁷⁹ maintains that though *Mahāyāna* was not directly concerned with the abolition of castes, it strongly opposed the caste system and repeatedly taught the evils of casteism. The theory of castes, which was propounded by birth, was not sensible because by birth one cannot upgrade his castes but by action he can become low or noble. In his work, namely 'The Buddha and His Teaching', Nārada quoted a

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

²⁷⁷ BTLS, pp. 213-4.

²⁷⁸ NBT, pp. 172-4.

²⁷⁹ JBC, p. 368.

passage from *Sutta Nipāta* (*Theravādin* doctrine) in order to explain this irrational division as follows:

“By birth is not one an outcaste,
By birth is not one a *brahmana*,
By deed is one an outcaste,
By deed is one a *brahmana*.”²⁸⁰

In reality, birth can not change one's castes but the action determines his value, low or noble. The good action causes him to become noble whereas bad actions causes him to be slighted. Birth and colours are not the pre-requisite conditions for caste division.

S. Radhakrishnan²⁸¹ says that: In ancient India, the caste system was in a confused condition where the distinctions were based on birth rather than on qualities. According to him, democracy is a modern motive of social reform in which *Mahāyānists* play an important role. It is said that the Buddha, who, for the first time in the known history of humankind, attempted to abolish slavery and established the higher morality and the idea of the brotherhood of humankind and brought the happiness to them. According to *Mahāyānists*, once the human-rights is established, everybody has chance to contribute himself into the social construction and development. It is the *Mahāyānists* who contributed enormously in establishment of equal-rights between men and women. In the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka sūtra*²⁸² men and women are equal in seeking for enlightenment and they are assured to become the future Buddhas. The equality between man and woman is universality of *Mahāyāna* from the aim of which, the status of women is raised to her highest position. In the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka sūtra*²⁸³, woman is not only equal with man in the liberated direction but she is also equal with all Buddhas in the absolute nature. It is *Mahāyānism* that raised the status of woman and brought to a realization of her importance to society.

²⁸⁰ NBT, p. 17.

²⁸¹ RIP₁, p. 437.

²⁸² BTLS, pp. 215-7.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 213-4.

Nārada²⁸⁴ maintains that before the advent of Buddhism, women in India were not held in high esteem. They did not enjoy sufficient freedom and were deprived of an opportunity to exhibit their innate spiritual capacities and the mental abilities. One Indian writer, Hemacandra²⁸⁵, looks down upon woman as the torch lighting the way to hell. Even celibacy was to be strictly observed by widows and the practice of self-immolation (*sati*) at the pyre of the husband also being performed. In ancient India, as is still seen today, the birth of daughter to a family was considered as an unwelcome and cumbersome addition. The innate goodness of both men and women is known by *Mahāyānists* and they are assigned their due places in *Mahāyāna* doctrine. Gender is not a barrier for purification or enlightenment. As a result, six thousand *Bhiksunis* were assured becoming Buddhas in their future lives.²⁸⁶ The freedom of women was regarded as one of causes led to prosperity of country and national harmony. The *Mahāyānic* theory of social harmony influenced on political sphere in the time from the first to the sixth century A.D.

L.M. Joshi²⁸⁷ asserts that it was through *Mahāyānic* influence and teachings of social harmony and tolerance that foreign invaders such as the Greek, Sakas, Kusānas and Hūnas, who came to India and settle there in the course of time immediately preceding and following the Christian era, were assimilated by Indian society.

The theory of social harmony is a positive contribution of *Mahāyāna* to national growth and its message of human-rights had left a deep impression on the mind of Indian people, which has been continued from the medieval age to this day.

Vegetarian Sacrifice

The immense kindness of *Mahāyānists* is directed not only to all human beings but also to animals as well. It is *Mahāyāna sūtra* that bans the sacrifice of animals and admonishes its followers to extend their loving-kindness to all living beings. The

²⁸⁴ NBT, p. 172.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ BTLS, pp. 216-7.

²⁸⁷ JBC, p. 370.

*Lankāvatāra sūtra*²⁸⁸ advocates vegetarianism in order to avoid killing the life of others, as life is precious to all. But in the *Jivaka sutta*²⁸⁹, *Hinayānists* allow monks to take meat, if it is not seen, heard and suspected to have been killed on purpose for them.

Though *Hinayānists* did not advocate animal sacrifice, they indirectly allowed their disciples to kill animals that were useful to ancient Indian agriculture.

The animal sacrifice is seen popularly in the *Brahmanical* literature. L.M Joshi²⁹⁰ indicates that the *Vedic Brahmanism* or *Vedicism* advocated sacrifice of animals and there was no mention of the principle of non-violence (*ahimsā*) in the entire *Vedic* literature prior to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. Through animal sacrifice, *Brahmanas* killed a heavy toll of cattle stock, therefore many movements of *Jainism* and *Mahāyānism* directed against their superstitious religion.²⁹¹

Even, human sacrifices were also described in the *Vedic* literature. A sculpture from *Mathura* shows a devotee offering his head to *Siva*.²⁹² D.N. Jha raises his voice to defend that perhaps some extreme sub-sects of cult preached such extreme practice such as human sacrifice. According to D.N.Jha, *Shaivism* advocated human sacrifice; the extreme character of it explained why it was less popular than *Vaishnavism*.

D.N. Jha says that Hsuan Tsang²⁹³, a Chinese pilgrim, who came to India in seventh century A.D., was about to be immolated before the image of *Durga*, the consort of *Siva*. But a sudden miraculous storm made his escape possible.

L.M. Joshi²⁹⁴ maintains that the *Mahāyānic* theories of *ahimsā* and *maitrī* influenced the *Brahmanical* writers. The authors of the *Manusmṛti* (200 A.D.), the *Mahābhārata* (200 B.C – 400 A.D.), and others accepted the tenet of *ahimsā* and thenceforth it became a cardinal principle in *Purānic Brahmanism (Hinduism)* also. It

²⁸⁸ SSLS, pp. 368-70.

²⁸⁹ MLS, Vol. 2, pp. 64-5.

²⁹⁰ JBC, p. 339.

²⁹¹ DAI, p. 52.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 108.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ JBC, p. 340.

is impossible to deny that *Purāṇic Brahmanism (Hinduism)* had borrowed the tenet of *ahimsā* from *Mahāyāna Buddhism*.²⁹⁵

According to L.M. Joshi²⁹⁶, the Hindu ethics has been absorbed by the best of *Mahāyānic* ethics. It means that respect for life, kindness to animals, a sense of responsibility and an endeavour after high life have been brought home to the Indian mind with renewed force. By *Mahāyānic* influences, *Hinduism* has shed extreme practices of religion which were irreconcilable with humanity and reason.

Apart from that, Swami Vivekananda²⁹⁷ has often noted the diverse *Mahāyāna* influence *Hinduism* such as stopping or lessening the customs of drinking wine and non killing of living animals for sacrifice or for food in India. He asserts that *Hinduism* was influenced by *Mahāyāna Buddhism* since the decline of Buddhism in India about twelfth century A.D., *Hinduism* took from *Mahāyānism* a few cardinal tenets of conduct such as *ahimsā*, *karunā*, *maitrī*, control of the mind, etc and made them as its own.

Impartial Service of Mahāyāna Bodhisattva

Hīnayāna ethics aims at the practice of eightfold path (*astangamarga*), that is, right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditation.²⁹⁸

Generally speaking, the eightfold path of *Hīnayāna* only leads to the individual benefits, *Mahāyānic* ethics, on the contrary, not only serves individual benefits but it also liberates humankind from the worldly sufferings. The *Bodhisattva's* whole hearted service to humankind is the highest manifestation of *Mahāyānic* ethics. The *Bodhisattva*, who always considers living beings as the means to his liberation, sacrifices himself for happiness of others and refusing the attainment of *Nirvāna* until all creatures being salved from pain.²⁹⁹ According to Suzuki³⁰⁰, a *Bodhisattva*, as a rule, makes vows before he begins his career, for his desire to attain the final stage of

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 348.

²⁹⁸ NBT, p. 180.

²⁹⁹ TSBKV, pp. 5-6.

³⁰⁰ SSLs, pp. 205-6.

Bodhisattvahood not only for himself but also for all living beings. Four vows of *Bodhisattva* are known as follows:

“Living beings whose number exceeds calculation, I vow to save all,
Defilements are inexhaustible, I vow to destroy all,
The means to liberation are innumerable, I vow to study all,
And the Buddhahood is the highest goal, I vow to attain it.”

Having vowed thus, *Mahāyāna Bodhisattva* performs all duties for the happiness of others without asking for gratitude or reward. He always seeks proper opportunities to serve others. He lives not only for himself but also for all. He loves all living beings like his relatives and always shares weal and woe with everybody.

The ethics of *Mahāyānism* is built on the base of love, kindness and compassion. If living beings are sick, *Bodhisattva* is a good physician to cure them. If they are sunk in poverty, he will support them with money and other things. If they are suffering, he will teach them the true *Dharma*, causing them free from bondage... It is because service to all living beings, the *Bodhisattva*'s compassionate heart is developed and his ethics is gradually advanced. If there were not living beings, the *Bodhisattva* would not have a chance to practise the *Bodhisattva* path and Buddhahood would have never come to him.

The Attainment of the Absolute

The Absolute is real-nature or Buddha-nature of man that is free from dualism and imperfection, free from sin, old-age, death, grief, hunger and thirst. It is the subject which persists irrespective of the external changes. It is also the common factor in the states of waking, dream, sleep, death, rebirth and the final liberation.³⁰¹

*Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*³⁰² affirms that the Absolute is free from craving (*tanhā*) from evil, from fear, it embraces all. Permanence, continuity, unity, and eternality are also its characteristics. It is a self-existent and self-complete entity and there is nothing outside it to exist. The Absolute is truth of truths, from which all

³⁰¹ RPU, p. 501.

³⁰² *Ibid.*

things are sprung up, existed and come back after their dissolutions.³⁰³ Vasubandhu I³⁰⁴ says the Absolute is the base of man's body and mind; it is not changed while his body and mind are changed. The Absolute consists in the truly subjective that can never become an object. It is the person who sees, not the object seen. The *Lankāvatāra sūtra*³⁰⁵ considers the Absolute as *Dharmakāya* that has assumed the shape of the whole universe. It is also known as the essence of all existences.

The Absolute is also known as the Buddha-knowledge, the intuitive wisdom that constitutes the essence of the Buddhahood. It is neither a thing made nor a thing not-made, neither cause nor effect, neither predicable nor unpredictable, neither describable nor indescribable, neither subject to perception nor beyond perception. According to P.V Bapat³⁰⁶, the Absolute is the same between Buddhas and living beings but by ignorance, one has not yet recognized it therefore he is turned by the wheel of *samsāra*. According to the Lotus *sūtra*, the purpose of the appearance of the Buddha in the world is to open the gate and shows Buddha-knowledge to all living beings and causing them to know and to live up to it.

According to the spirit of Heart *sūtra*³⁰⁷, the Absolute or *sūnyatā* can not be attained since it is invisible entity that is potential in every person. This potential power can only be recognized by intuitive wisdom and when once it is experienced, one's altruistic and selfless heart is advanced and his action corresponding with ethics. In other word, the *Bodhisattva*'s ethics is complete only when the Absolute is experienced by him.

The concept of the Absolute of *Mahāyānism* influenced the philosophical thoughts of *Samkāra* and *Rāmanuja*. The former identifies the Absolute with *Nirguna Brahman* that is an unqualified non-dualism. It means that he does not admit plurality of forms as souls and matter³⁰⁸; while the latter considers the absolute as *Saguna*

³⁰³ LSS, pp. 73-7.

³⁰⁴ STTMC, pp. 115-6.

³⁰⁵ BYB, p. 140.

³⁰⁶ SBS, p. 135.

³⁰⁷ RIP₁, p. 659.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 661.

Brahman that is a qualified non-dualism. It means that he admit plurality since the supreme spirit subjects in a plurality of forms as souls and matter.³⁰⁹

(v) Mahāyānic Contribution to Indian Art

It is said that after advent of *Mahāyānism*, *Brahmanical* art came into existence. According to L.M. Joshi³¹⁰, the worship of icons, images, and symbols in *Hinduism* seems to have been introduced after emergence of *Mahāyānism*. According to K. Antonova³¹¹, in historical times, the art and ritual of image worship was popularized first by the *Mahāyānists* and it soon became an essential feature of all sects of *Pūranic Brahmanism (Hinduism)*.

The spread of *Mahāyānism* gradually became more elaborate and abroad so monastic complex, *stūpas*, *vihāras* had to be built from its requirements.

Through the donations of wealthy merchants, guilds of handicraftmen, landlords and royal votaries as well as under patronages of Sakas, Kusānas, Sātavāhanas and Guptas, many architectural monuments were built at many places such as *Sanchi* and *Bharhut* in central India, *Amaravatī* and *Nāgārjunakonda* in south India, and *Karle* and *Bhaja* in western India, etc.³¹² Among these monuments, *Nālandā* University, which is said to be endowed and patronized by the emperors of Gupta, was not only a centre of *Mahāyānism*, it was also an outstanding national and international educational institution from the fifth century A.D. to the thirteenth century A.D. in India.³¹³

According to K. Antonova³¹⁴, all India art schools were influenced by the ideas of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. These art schools are known as follows: *Gandhara* school in north-western India; *Mathura* school in the *Ganges* valley (north India); *Amaravatī* school in *Andhra* (south India), *Vengī* school in south India, etc.

³⁰⁹ JBC, p. 336.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ KHI, p. 118.

³¹² BYB, pp. 244-5.

³¹³ AIB, p. 442.

³¹⁴ KHI, p. 173.

Mahāyānic architectures in the period of study consisted of images of the Buddha and *Bodhisattvas*, monasteries, temples, caves and others.

The Buddha Images of Mahāyānic Schools of Art

S. Radhakrishnan³¹⁵ maintains that: “Buddhism imitated *Brahmanism* in making a god of Buddha, images of Buddha were set up and thus devotion to a personal being developed.”

In fact, before the advent of *Mahāyānism* in India, there were no images of gods as well as that of the Buddha. According to L.M. Joshi³¹⁶ and Romila Tharpe³¹⁷, all images of *Brahmanical* gods came into existence after the advent of *Mahāyānism* and *Purānic Brahmanas* imitated *Mahāyānists* to make their god images standing and sitting on the lotus seats.

It is said that from the Buddha’s *Nirvāna* to the first century A.D., the Buddha was depicted by means of symbols in Indian sculptures and painting such as “a wheel” for his turning *Dharma*-wheel in *Sarnath*, “a bodhi tree” for his enlightenment, “a horse” for his renunciation of the world, “a footprint” for his super ordinary characteristics and some other symbols.³¹⁸

L.M. Joshi³¹⁹ affirms that with the emergence of *Mahāyāna*, the Buddha image became the central object of worship and it was manufactured in thousands in plastic forms, and about the beginning of the first century A.D., images of the Buddha began to come into existence and *Mahāyānism* thus inspired the style of god images of *Brahmanism*.

There were the differences of Buddha images among the various ancient Indian schools of art. Generally speaking, it is still recognizes that the first images of Buddha were made by the *Gandhara* school of art about the first century A.D.

³¹⁵ RIP₁, p. 583.

³¹⁶ JBC, p. 348.

³¹⁷ RPHEI, p. 147.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

³¹⁹ JBC, p. 359.

Nancy Wilson Ross³²⁰ asserts that the *Gandhara* image of Buddha, which was made by the artists from Mediterranean world, often resemble Greek art or the art of Roman empire in the Christian era. D.N. Jha³²¹ adds that many early *Gandhara* Buddhas had apollonian faces, their draperies arranged in the style of Roman toga. According to him, *Gandhara* images were curious mixture of abstraction and realism. The brows and eyes of the Buddha were modeled with the hard dryness of carving characteristic of late antique art, whereas the lower part of the face was sculptured with apparent concern for the realistic definition of the structure of the mouth and the chin. Similar features of the head or bust type can be visualized in various Buddhist sculptures belonging to Kusāna period. For example, the image of Buddha from *Jhajjar* in which the Buddha is seated on lotus seat, the dress worn by the Buddha known as *sanghati*, is Greek. The halo around his head is a Hellenistic feature.³²²

Nancy Wilson Ross³²³ indicates that the fasting Buddha from *Madhubun* (*Maholi*) shows that the *Gandhara* artists were much careful in carving the body details to show forceful realism. The physical condition of fasting Buddha has been shown by ribs and bones, emaciated belly and sunken facial expression.

Apart from that, various heads of the Buddha found from *Kharkodda*³²⁴, *Mahamoodpur*³²⁵, *Gurgaon*³²⁶, *Brahamanāvas*³²⁷ reveal the similar features of *Gandhara* art of Kusānas. Various busts such as *Bodhisattva* from *Mohanbāri*³²⁸ (*Rotah*), Buddha in *vajraparyankā* pose from *Brahamavas*³²⁹ (*Rotah*), and colossal bust of the Buddha from *Gurgaon*³³⁰ represent the same *Gandharian* features of Kusāna times.

³²⁰ NTAE, pp. 183-4.

³²¹ DAI, p. 93.

³²² *Ibid.*

³²³ NTAE, p. 147.

³²⁴ Aj, Vol. IX (fig. 113).

³²⁵ MO (fig. 20, 21, 23, 24, 28)

³²⁶ SCGJ, pp. 378-9.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ CIA, p. 145.

³²⁹ KJI, p. 115.

³³⁰ SEK, p. 76.

The images of Buddha were made by the *Gandhara* stucco school of art were more beautiful. The face was softened by an imperceptible smile. The slightly protruding eyes and fleshy cheeks differ from the classical models the manifestation of the curls on the heads. Dress and stance follow the tradition of the stone carvers but with far greater freedom and naturalness. The execution of these figures reflects the techniques imparted to stucco by importing Hellenistic pieces. The early group of the Buddha figures that belonged to the first century A.D. distinguished by clear and impressive heads with long curl and beautifully drawn carves outlining the lineaments. They show locks of hairs in wavy curls overflowing the *usnisā* wherever it is marked. The body is balanced with clear cut proportion and the attitude is realized.

The images of the Buddha made by *Mathura* school, according to P.V. Bapat³³¹, were carved with the male shaped straight, firm and stiff with broad and masculine chest. Halo round the head of the Buddha was plain and often bears scalloped border, the head has small curls, the drapery covers only one shoulder, lower garment is seen up to the middle of legs, the right hand is raised in *abhaya mudra* (gesture of protection) with a beautiful decoration. The face bears half open eyes with a smiling expression on the face.

The *Mathura* origin has been found at a number places such as *Sanchi*, *Sarnath*, *Kosambi*, *Ahichchhatra* and *Sanghol*, etc.³³² And images of the Buddha and *Bodhisattvas* in seated and free-standing pose, of both normal human size and colossal stature, belonged to the period of Kusānas.

R.C. Sharma³³³ holds that in the end of the first century B.C., the relief tradition of *Mathura* school was replaced by stereotyped images. The colossal *Bodhisattva* from *Maholi* and *Kātra* through its volume, drapery, and pose remind the early *Mathura* tradition. The great Buddha figures of *Mathura*, *Sarnath*, *Ajanta*, and *Biḥar* are immortal specimens which symbolize the ideals of a whole age. And

³³¹ BYB, p. 250.

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ SKI, pp. 225-6.

Debala Mitra³³⁴ holds that colossal copper and gold images of the Buddha were also found in *Karmir*.

The images of the Buddha in *Vengī* school of art either standing or seated are fairly common.³³⁵ They appear either as free standing isolated sculptures or within the relief compositions. As a rule, they have spiral *usnīsas* (curly hair) and drapery as well as to leave the right shoulders bare. In a few images, however, the garments cover both shoulders but a number of such images is insignificant. The *Vengī* type of the Buddha images appear to be closely allied to the *Mathura* type of Buddha and *Bodhisattvas*. The style of *Vengī* art extended to *Srilanka* naturally because of commercial contacts and religious affiliation. And the *Vengī* type of sculptures have been discovered as far as *Dong Duong* in *Champā* (modern Middle of Vietnam) and Indonesia.³³⁶

The images of the Buddha in *Amaravatī* school are also highly remarked by scholars. K. Antonova³³⁷ holds that the Buddha image made by the *Amaravatī* school being elaborated in more detail and being represented as a human aspect and to be depicted as the supreme deified being. In the Gupta period, the Buddha was portrayed as the embodiment of divine power. He has a broad torso and narrow waist, and hardly perceptible muscles. The whole figure is executed in a special style, the head is slightly inclined, and the right arm is bent at the elbow in the '*abhaya mudra*' pose; the figure of the Buddha is conspicuously idealized, the pose is natural and unconstrained, conveying an impression of inner concentration, the face wears a blissful smile.³³⁸

Architectural Monuments in Mahāyānic Art

The architectural monuments concerning *Mahāyānism* consisted of *stūpas*, temples, monasteries, some free-standing and some cut into rock at hillsides.

³³⁴ DBN, p. 109.

³³⁵ CAK, *op. cit.* (fig. 343).

³³⁶ ABIA, p. 100.

³³⁷ KHI, p. 174.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

It is interesting to say that, there was no evidence of *Brahmanical* monasteries or any other monument of *Brahmanism* before the time of Samkara (9th CAD). According to D.N. Jha³³⁹, the *Purānic Brahmanical* religion was still in its formative stage. Art, therefore, mainly centered round Buddhism.

L.M. Joshi³⁴⁰ observes that the monastic institutions of India seem due to Buddhism and Samkara perceived the advantage of the coenobitic life for organizing religion and founded a number of temples, subsequent religious leaders imitated him to build some other temples. Some of the centres founded by Samkara were located at *Puri* in *Orissa*.

Swami Vivekananda³⁴¹, a leader of Samkara school, also maintains that the temple of *Jagannath* was an old Buddhist temple, *Hindus* took it over and hinduized it. And other temples of Buddhism were also took over by *Hindus*. For example, the temple at *Badrinath* in *Garhwar* in which even the original Buddha image was worshipped as the image of *Viṣṇu*.

Evidences above prove enough that all Hindu temples came into existence after the advent of *Mahāyānism* and they were inspired by *Mahāyānists*. Sudha Sengupta³⁴² affirms that the earliest and the major number of the temples, monasteries and caves, from the first to the sixth centuries A.D., were Buddhistical. D.N. Jha³⁴³ also asserts that the artistic remains of the period consisted chiefly of Buddhist *stūpas* and Buddhist cave temples.

The *stūpa*, according to D.N. Jha³⁴⁴, began as earthen burial mound. It was a hemispherical dome built over the relics of the Buddha or of a sanctified monk, or sacred texts. The relic was kept in the central chamber at the base of the *stūpa* which was surrounded by a path enclosed by railings. Of the surviving *stūpa* railings, the

³³⁹ DAI, p. 91.

³⁴⁰ JBC, p. 351.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² MBSB, p. 272.

³⁴³ DAI, p. 91.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

earliest came from *Bharhut* and dated to the first century B.C. At the same time, the older *Sanchi stūpa* was renovated and enlarged to twice its original size.

D.N. Jha³⁴⁵ says that the *stūpa* of *Amaravati* was larger and more ornate than the one at *Sanchi*, it seems to have been completed about the second century A.D.

Sudha Sengupta³⁴⁶ maintains that the great Kusāna, king Kaniska, built some new *stūpas* in many places. The *Dharmarājika stūpa*, which was built by Kaniska, was seen by Fa hien (Chinese pilgrim) in the fifth century A.D.³⁴⁷ Hsuan Tsang, who came to India in the early seventh century A.D., reported that he saw at least one hundred *stūpas* in *Kasmir*.³⁴⁸

Apart from these *stūpas*, there were many *stūpas* built in *Sind*³⁴⁹, *Sarnath*³⁵⁰, *Andhra Pradesh*³⁵¹, *Amaravati*³⁵², *Nāgarjunakonda*³⁵³, *Jaggayyapeta*³⁵⁴, etc.

Mahāyānic monasteries, temples, and caves also played an important role in the ancient Indian culture. The new architecture of *Mahāyānism* would have been determined in part by religious requirements and the need to distinguish these from the architecture of *Brahmanism* and that of *Hinayānism*. There were marvelous cave temples at *Karle*, *Kanhiri*, and *Bhaja* in *Bombay* state and *Ajanta* in *Deccan*, some free standing and some cut into rock at hill-sides. Sudha Sengupta³⁵⁵ says that there were at least 100 monasteries in *Kasmir* that had been seen by Hsuan Tsang, Wu Kung³⁵⁶, Chinese people, who lived at the same place about a century later, reported to have seen about 300 monasteries.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁶ MBSB, p. 274.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-80.

³⁵¹ DBM, pp. 198-9.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 206-7.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

³⁵⁴ MBSB, p. 276.

³⁵⁵ MBSB, p. 276.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

During the reign of Gupta, in the fifth century A.D., University of *Nālandā* was built.³⁵⁷ Debhala Mitra³⁵⁸ indicates that five kings of *Gupta* dynasty erected many monasteries at *Nālandā*.

In *Madhya Pradesh*³⁵⁹, there were many rock-cut monuments to have been discovered at *Bagh* and *Dhamnar*. In *H. Nasik*³⁶⁰, a group of twenty four caves locally known as *Pāndulena* or *Pāndava* caves was cut in a long line on the north face of a hill. These architectures represent a brilliant phase in the rock-cut architecture of the second century A.D. During this period came up the majority of the caves. Caves in *Aurangabad*³⁶¹ belonged to the sixth century A.D. Their architectural and sculptural features combined with the introduction of female deities. These caves are particularly interesting for the inspired orgy of the sculptural magnificence, surpassing in subtle grace and plastic treatment and effective display of varied types, even the best of *Ajanta*. In *Ellora*³⁶², the Buddhist caves comprise twelve caves sprang up mostly in the sixth century A.D. The chief interest of this group, the last bright flame of the Buddhist rock cut architecture, lies in its having certain original forms excavated on a gigantic scale and not found elsewhere. Many monasteries, temples and *caityas* are found in the *Madhya Pradesh*³⁶³, *Bharhut*³⁶⁴, *Sirpur*³⁶⁵, *Jamalgarhi*³⁶⁶, *Taxila*³⁶⁷, etc.

According to D.N. Jha³⁶⁸, these magnificent monasteries were often situated near the trade routes or in the hilly areas or the main points where pilgrims and merchants often stopped.

³⁵⁷ ACB, p. 128.

³⁵⁸ DBM, pp. 85-6.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 91-2.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 168-70.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 179-80.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 181-3.

³⁶³ DBM, p. 91.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-6.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 102-3.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-3.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 123-7.

³⁶⁸ DAI, p. 86.

Painting in Mahāyānic Art

Painting was a developed art. D.N. Jha³⁶⁹ indicates that apart from professional artists, men and women of the upper classes could ably handle a brush.

Jha's appraisal as above blows up abilities of upper classes. In fact everybody can not have an aptitude for paintings except professional artists. The *Mahāyānic* painting, which displays the Buddha's past and present lives and other edifying legends, became main subject of the artists in the period. The remains of *Mahāyānic* paintings, dating from the first century B.C. are found in some of *caitya* halls at *Ajanta* in the *Deccan*. P.V. Bapat³⁷⁰ indicates that a principal wall painting of the period in cave No 10 is devoted to the illustration of *Saddanta Jataka*. According to him, *Mahāyānic* paintings had attained its maturity during the *Gupta* period (5th-6th c. A.D.).³⁷¹

D.N. Jha³⁷² asserts that remains of *Mahāyānic* paintings of the *Gupta* period may be seen in the caves at *Bagh* (cave IV, 5th c. A.D.), *Ajanta* (caves I, II, XVI, XVII and XIX) and *Badami* (cave III, 6th c. A.D.). The *Ajanta* artists displayed consummate skill in delineating human and animal figures. The representation of the *Bodhisattva* announcing his renunciation (cave I) and that of Indra and his entourage flying to greet the Buddha in *Tushita* heaven (cave XVII) are only a few of the many masterpieces. Decorations in ceilings, pedestals of columns and doors and window frames speak of the artists' extraordinary powers of conception and technique. Though the theme of paintings at *Ajanta* is religious, one can see in them a dramatic panorama of the life of princes, nobles, warriors and sages. The human and animal figures display vigour, adding grace and vitality to the style which reveals great delicacy and depth of feeling. A quiet dignity, poise and detachment are the hall-marks of classical *Mahāyānic* paintings in India.

Generally, *Mahāyānic* art not only enriches Indian art but it also had influences on Buddhist arts outside India.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

³⁷⁰ BYB, pp. 253-4.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² DAI, p. 112.

It is said that images of the Buddha, that are sitting or standing on the lotus seats, are productions of *Mahāyāna*. These images are not only worshipped by the Buddhists in the countries following *Mahāyānism* but they are also worshipped by the countries practising *Hīnayāna* doctrines like Srilanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and some *Theravāda* temples in south Vietnam.

Influence of Indian Mahāyānic Art on Buddhist Art of Countries Outside India

P.V. Bapat³⁷³ maintains that *Mahāyānic* art outside India has produced a magnificent wealth of sculptures and paintings, which include many unique specimens, have no parallel in India. The sculptors have often displayed great vision and thought in producing these masterpieces that compel the attention of scholars and connoisseurs of art from all parts of the world.

In Afghanistan

According to P.V. Bapat³⁷⁴, in *Bamiyan* (Afghanistan) there were colossal figures of the Buddha modeled on an earlier *Gandhara* type belonging to the 3rd and 4th CAD, these figures carved out of a sandstone cliff in the region. Simultaneously many monasteries and temples, which were influenced by the Indian architectures, were found in Afghanistan by Hsuan Tsang on his way to India in seventh century A.D.

In Srilanka

P.V. Bapat³⁷⁵ asserts that most remarkable image of the Buddha of early date is the seated one in meditation from *Anuradhapura* was influenced by *Amaravati* school. And the metal image of the Buddha from *Badulla*, which is now preserved in the Colombo museum, was modeled after the *Amaravati* bronze of the *Chola* tradition.³⁷⁶ A standing Buddha near *Ruanweli stūpa*, dating from the 2nd c. A.D. is an exact replica of similar figure from *Amaravati*.³⁷⁷

³⁷³ BYB, p. 269.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

The paintings from *Sigirya* are probably more intimately connected with the pallava paintings from *Sittanavasal*, *Panamalai*, and *Kancipuram* than any others.³⁷⁸

In Thailand

R.C. Majumdar³⁷⁹ holds that an early site, Pong Tuk, has yielded bronze Buddha images of the *Amaravatī* style, which may be dated in 2nd c. A.D. According to him, the Buddha images of the Gupta style both of earlier and later type have also been discovered. And many monasteries and temples have also discovered there. Especially the incident of *nāga mucalinda* protecting the Buddha from a great storm for seven days and nights after his enlightenment, a great favourite in the *Krishna* valley, is probably nowhere so prominent as in Thailand.³⁸⁰ Another important incident from the Buddha's life, which has its earliest representation of *Bharhut* and which is also a great favourite in Gupta and mediaeval sculpture, is the descent of the Buddha from the *Trayastrimsa* heaven after his preaching the law to his mother. This is depicted in a variety of form in Thailand.³⁸¹

In Cambodia

P.V. Bapat³⁸² maintains that the image of Buddha, who seats on the *nāga* with the halo round his head, was influenced by *Amaravatī* school of art. Even in the earliest *Amaravatī* sculpture, where the footprints of the Buddha were represented, are seen in some temples in Cambodia.³⁸³

B.N. Puri³⁸⁴ writes that an inscription was found at Thma puok, mentions images of the Buddha, Maitreya and Avalokitesvara. Through these evidences, *Mahāyānism* is proved to be prevailing in Cambodia from 1st to 13th CAD. Apart from that, the inscription found at *Phnom Bantay* (south of *Angkar Bauray* to the west of

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

³⁷⁹ MBSB, pp. 313-4.

³⁸⁰ BYB, p. 266.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*

³⁸² *Ibid.*

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁴ MSBS, p. 339.

Battambang) invokes the images of *Mahāyānic* divinities including *Lokesvara* and *Prajñā pāramitā*. All these were influenced by India *Vengī* and *Amaravatī* schools.

In Burma

P.V. Bapat³⁸⁵ says that the *stūpa* of *Kuang Hmudaw* near *Sagain* hill, in upper Burma comes closest to the *stūpa* of *Sanchi* in India. The *Ngakye Nadaun stūpa* of the 10th century A.D. from *Pagan* is almost similar to the *Dharnekh stūpa* at *Sarnath*.³⁸⁶ The *Mahābodhi* temple at the same place, which belonged to the 13th century A.D., resembled the *Mahābodhi* temple at *Gaya*. Other *stūpas* of the 11th and 12th centuries A.D. were also influenced by Indian architecture.³⁸⁷

In Malay Peninsula

R.C. Majumdar³⁸⁸ holds that the temples, both of brick and stone, were built in *Wellesley* and *Keddah* in the fourth or fifth century A.D. are similar to Indian temples. According to him, the great *stūpa* of *Nakhon Sri Dhammarat* and a number of temples surrounding it seemingly were influenced by Indian architectures.³⁸⁹

In Indonesia

Two inscriptions dated A.D. 778-782 refer to the construction of a temple *Tārā* at *Kalasan* and setting up an image of *Mañjurī* at *Kelurak* by the *Sailendra* emperors, who were in close touch with *Pala* emperor, *Devapāla*, at *Bengal* and the *Cola* emperor at *Rajaraja*.³⁹⁰

P.V. Bapat³⁹¹ says that the image of the Buddha seen in the temple at *Candi Mendut* is similar to the seated Buddha at *Ajanta* and elsewhere and it closely follows earlier Gupta sculptural type.

³⁸⁵ BYB, p. 265.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁸ MSBS, p. 339.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

³⁹¹ BYB, p. 268.

In Vietnam

Champā was the oldest name of Middle of Vietnam; in the later period, it was merged into North and called *Annam*, one of three countries of *Dong Duong*. Ancient south of Vietnam belonged to *Funam* and later it was merged Middle and North areas into Vietnam. According to R.C. Majumdar³⁹², the early introduction of Buddhism in this region was indicated by an image of Buddha made in the *Amaravatī* style that found at *Dong Duong*. But there was no epigraphic reference to Buddhism before 9th c. A.D.

The long inscription³⁹³ on the four faces of a stela found at *Dong Duong* records the installation of an image of the Buddha in 875 c. A.D. as well as a Buddhist monastery built by the Buddhist king Indravarman. The remains of a Buddhist temple found in the province of Quang Nam shows influences of Indian art. Specially the incident of *naga mucalinda* protecting the Buddha from a great storm for seven days and nights after his enlightenment, a great favourite in *Krishna* valley, is discovered recently at An Nhon district and now it is kept at Son Long temple, Tuy Phuoc district, Binh Dinh province, Vietnam. In the Ly dynasty (11th c. A.D.) from the image of Avalokitesvara made by the Indian *Vengī* school, Vietnamese sculptors developed into images of female Avalokitesvara with one thousand hands in which one thousand eyes were sculptured. These statues stand for strength of Vietnamese people in the heroic struggle for their independence and country defence for thousand years. Besides, images of the Buddha, which are worshipped in Vietnamese temples, have bearing of the Indian *Vengī* and *Amaravatī* styles.

In China

P.V. Bapat³⁹⁴ maintains that the influence of *Mahāyānic* art from India can also be traced in the figures of the Buddha in the thousand caves at *Tun Huang* in China. According to him, the wall paintings in these caves are akin to those at *Bamiyan* (Afghanistan) and may be said to be related to those at *Ajanta*. Rock carvings at *Yun*

³⁹² MSBS, pp. 315-6.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

³⁹⁴ BYB, p. 261.

Kang clearly show Indian *Mahāyānic* origin. In *Shansi-hope* province (to the west of *Peking*), twenty one big caves have been discovered. The old Buddhist monuments in china were influenced by the styles of *Gandhara* and *Amaravatī* schools. Bapat³⁹⁵ also says that the Buddhist sculptures from the 4th c. A.D. onwards in the grottos of *Yun Kang*, *Maichishan* as well as in the caves at *Tun Huang* show the influence of the *Gandhara* school as well as of the pure Indian style of the Gupta period.

In Japan

The image of *Vairocana* Buddha at *Nara* is certainly influenced by *Amaravatī* school. The paintings on the wall of the *Haryuji* monastery (8th c. A.D.) certainly recalls Indian influence which may perhaps have come through China.³⁹⁶

In Nepal

According to P.V. Bapat³⁹⁷, the *Svayambhunath* and the *Bodhinath stūpas* from Nepal are influenced by Indian *Pala* art. All monasteries and temples in Nepal are certainly influenced by Indian architectures.

In Tibet

P.V. Bapat³⁹⁸ holds that Tibet *stūpas* are not very different from Nepalese ones, but the famous *stūpa* from *Gyan-Tse* with its unusual plan and elevation reminds one of the *Borobudur stūpa* in Java. They are also influenced by *Pala* art. The monasteries in Tibet contain stucco figures, wood carvings and *Tanka* paintings which bear Indian style.

* * *

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

³⁹⁸ BYB, pp. 262-3.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Mahāyāna was one of twenty schools of ancient Indian *Buddhism*. It is considered as the most progressive school in thought and practice. Of thought, *Hīnayānists* only mention the relative truth and recognize the impermanence, suffering, and selflessness of all phenomenal things, whereas, *Mahāyānists* reveal both, the relative truth and the absolute truth. According to them, the absolute truth or absolute *Sūnyatā* is foundation of all existences and all things spring up from the absolute, exist in it and return back to it after their dissolution. The absolute *Sūnyatā* is forever but all things manifested from it are impermanent and perishable. Of the practice, *Hīnayānists* only expound the practice of Eightfold Path and attainment of *Arhatship*, whereas, innumerable means are opened in the *Mahāyāna* doctrine. Apart from the practice of *Sīla*, *dhyana*, and *prajñā* or ten *pāramitās*, *Mahāyānists* also practise devotion (*bhakti*) and impartial service (*anābhogacaryā*) towards creatures. *Mahāyānists* hold that it is the devotion and impartial service that purify the mind and achieve the knowledge of the absolute *Sūnyatā*. It means that, through the performance of devotion and impartial service, one can root out all attachments and defilements from one's mind thereby one can unite with one's Buddha-nature. The purpose of *Hīnayāna* is individual liberation; whereas, the end of *Mahāyāna* is based on universal liberation.

The ideal of *Bodhisattva* is considered as the kernel of *Mahāyāna*. *Hīnayānists* believe in one *Bodhisattva*, who was before the enlightenment of Buddha. While *Mahāyānists* believe in an infinite number of *Bodhisattvas* whoevers volunteer to enter into the suffering world in order to save living beings could become *Bodhisattvas*. There is the difference between *Arhat* and *Bodhisattva* in the *Mahāyāna* doctrines. After attaining *Arhatship*, the *Hīnayānic* Saint enjoys happiness of *Nirvāna* and never turns back to the suffering world saving beings. Though a *Bodhisattva* may be not led by *Karma* into rebirth, out of compassion, he denies the happiness of *Nirvāna* and enter into the suffering world to save living beings. According to *Mahāyāna*, *Nirvāna* is not nihilism. It is an enlightened entity neither positive nor passive, neither

egolessness nor non-egolessness nor both nor neither. So *samsāra* is not different from *Nirvāna*. Enlightenment, according to *Mahāyāna*, does not mean simply the understanding Four Noble Truths in their positive states, but the experience of the absolute *Sūnyatā* that creates the original enlightenment of all living beings. The images of Buddha, *Bodhisattva*, god, and goddess have become the worshipped objects of *Mahāyānists*. Besides the tenet of virtue, meditation, and wisdom, a doctrine of salvation by faith is emphasized in the *Mahāyāna sūtras*; especially, *Mahāyānists* do not believe in *Arhatship* as the final liberation. An *Arhat* only attains partial liberation and he must have something more to learn.

The spirit of tolerance and understanding other religions has been the nature of *Mahāyāna*. So *Mahāyānists* always respect various religious beliefs and live in harmony with them in brotherhood. All gods and goddesses of *Brahmanism* like Śiva, Viṣṇu, Laksmi, Ganesh, etc. are considered as *Bodhisattvas*, who protect the Buddha's *Dharma* and monks.

In *Mahāyāna* doctrine, the Buddha is regarded as a god higher than other gods. He never dies and he can save all beings by his supernatural powers. Moreover, the *Mahāyāna* doctrine often uses the Symbolic and Negative dialectical literature to describe truth therefore it is difficult to understand its profound meanings. That is the reason that various scholars and *Theravādin* monks have misunderstood the *Mahāyāna sūtras* so much so that they even refuse to accept these *sūtras* as the words of Buddha. According to them, the metaphysical, mythological, superstitious factors contained in them do not address the need of the present life. But the indepth study of the *Mahāyānic Sūtras* addresses profound questions of philosophy, psychology, ethics, metaphysics, cosmology, etc. *Mahāyānic* doctrine is really necessary not only for ethical life and scientific temper but also for sciences in the world.

According to *Mahāyāna* tradition, *Mahāyāna sūtras* were taught by the Sakyamuni Buddha and these were first written in the *Andhra* country (south India) and then in the west and afterwards in the north.

In fact, *Mahāyānic* and *Hīnayānic sūtras* were not taught directly by the Buddha. They were written on the basis of the Buddha's words by his disciples later

on. That is why each Buddhist sect has its own *sūtras* and *sāstras*. There are at least 600 *Mahāyāna sūtras* found in the original *Sanskrit* texts and in the Chinese and Tibetan translations. Among these *sūtras*, the system of *Prajñā paramitā sūtras* is regarded as the foundation of *Mahāyāna* philosophy. There were many renowned philosophers of *Mahāyāna* such as Asvaghosa, Vasubandhu, Nāgarjuna, Asanga who lived during the period under study; Nāgarjuna is considered as the soul of *Mahāyāna Buddhism*. He wrote many books related to philosophy, psychology, and logic.

There were two main schools of *Mahāyāna* – the *Madhyamika* and *Yogācāra* schools. Both these schools were primarily based on the doctrine of *Sūnyatā*, nevertheless different in emphasis.

The *Madhyamika* school used the term *Sūnyatā* for both, the conventional truth and the absolute truth. On the contrary, *Yogācāra* used the term *ālayavijñāna* for cosmic mind and human mind. According to *Madhyamika*, the universe and man had been created by five aggregates that are always in the states of becoming, abiding, changing, and perishing. Though all conditioned things are impermanent and perishable, their essence is eternal. This essence cannot be described by any language but in order to indicate it, it is called *Sūnyatā* that is not created by material elements and exists forever. *Madhyamika* advocated to practise ten *pāramitās* and experience twelve stages of *Bodhisattva*.

The *Yogācāra* school believes that universe and man have been created by consciousness (the seeds of phenomena – mental and physical). According to *Yogācāra*, only *ālayavijñāna* (the totality of universe) is real and all things manifested from *ālayavijñāna* are impermanent, changing, and perishing. *Yogācāra* advocated to practise *yoga* in order to transmute consciousness into wisdom.

Most of the scholars agree that *Mahāyāna Buddhism* developed from *Mahāsanghika* school that was branched off from the Early *Buddhism* about 110 years after the death of Buddha. There is no consensus among scholars as regards its date of emergence. A set of scholars asserts that *Mahāyāna Buddhism* came into existence during the time of Kaniska (1st B.C. – 1st A.D.); whereas, the other set of scholars argues that *Mahāyāna Buddhism* was present before the period of Asoka.

The views put forth by the second group of scholars in regard to the date of emergence of *Mahāyāna* seems more logical and convincing as in the first century A.D., *Mahāyāna Buddhism* not only reached China but Asiatic oases like *Khotan*, *Kasgar*, *Tun Huang* etc. had become the centres of *Mahāyāna*. Moreover, two inscriptions, which have been discovered recently at *Swat* and *Taxila*, authenticate that *Mahāyāna* was prevalent in North-West India during the time of Asoka. Further, the *prajñā paramitā sūtra* was composed in *Andhra* country in the second century B.C. and the *Avatamsaka sūtra* in the first century A.D.

The above referred evidences, leave no doubt that *Mahāyāna Buddhism* came into existence much before the time of Asoka and continued to grow during the times of Sungas, Sakas, Kusānas, Sātavahānas, and Guptas.

The appearance of *Mahāyāna* was seemingly a cultural and ideological revolution in ancient India. An effort has been made in *Mahayanist Buddhism* not only to redress the weaknesses of *Hīnayāna* doctrines but also prompted the philosophers of *Upanisads* to assimilate the progressive ideas of *Mahayanist* doctrines into *Upanisadic* thoughts.

The period from the first century B.C. to the sixth century A.D. was the heyday of *Mahāyāna Buddhism* in India. Under the patronages of Sungas, Sakas, Kusānas Sātavahānas, and Guptas, *Mahāyāna Buddhism* not only developed in India but it was also spread to the Asiatic countries.

Under influence of *Mahāyāna*, the changes could be seen in all social activities including politic, economy, literature, religion, ethics, and art. Before the period of Mauryas, caste system was prevalent in Indian society and the discrimination between four castes became severe. After the advent of *Mahāyāna* some progressive changes could be seen in Indian society. During the period under study, the caste discrimination was seemingly blurred and *Brahmins* could not achieve considerable ascendancy. During the time of Asoka, a section of *Sūdras*, for the first time in Indian history, was set down in the agricultural settlement and aided by the state. Apart from that, many sub-castes emerged on the basis of occupation and women were also enjoyed some kind of freedom. The scholarly and educated women, though number is

very few, played an important role in running of the administration and they held property in their own rights.

Though most of ancient Indian rulers followed *Brahmanism*, their thoughts and practice were influenced by *Mahāyāna Buddhism*. After *Kalinga* war, Asoka thought that he had killed many people, he, therefore, came to *Buddhism* in order to repent his sin and he built many *stūpas*, *vihāras* in his kingdom; especially, he erected many stone pillars and made commemorative monuments in the *Buddhist* holy places. He issued fourteen edicts in which the tenets of *ahimsā*, *karunā*, *dhyāna*, *prajñā* of *Mahāyāna* were mentioned. *Mahāyāna* had flourished in the period of Sakas. The rulers of Saka dynasty built many *stūpas*, *vihāras*, temples in their place. Before becoming a *Buddhist*, Kaniska followed *Brahmanism* and by the influence of Asvaghosa, a great *Mahāyāna* philosopher, Kaniska converted to *Mahāyāna Buddhism*. In his kingdom, *Mahāyānism* was accepted as the state religion and under his patronage, the fourth *Buddhist* Council held in *Kasmir*. After this *Buddhist* Council, many *Mahāyāna sūtras* and *sāstras* were composed and many *Buddhist* missionaries were sent to Asiatic countries to propagate *Mahāyāna* doctrines. Though most of the Sātavahana rulers were followers of *Brahmanism*, they also supported *Mahāyāna*. Under their patronage, many *Mahāyāna sūtras* and *sāstras* were written in *Andhra* country. Especially, *Mahāyāna Buddhism* had flourished during the time of Gautamiputra, one of kings of Sātavahāna dynasty. *Mahāyānism* reached its climax during the period of Guptas. During the period, philosophy, ethics, and art of *Mahāyāna* were developed and influenced Hinduism. The University of *Nālandā* was built by king Kumaragupta during the fifth century A.D. The idol worship, the practice of devotion and recitation of *Dharanis* were considered as characteristic feature of *Mahāyānism* during the time of Guptas. Moreover, many *Mahāyāna* missionaries were sent to the countries of Central Asia and China in the period of Guptas. Simultaneously, some *Buddhist* monks from China and Central Asia like I-Tsing and Kumarajīva came to India to learn *Sanskrit* and *Mahāyānic* philosophy.

After the advent of *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, a significant progress in economic activities including agriculture, industry, handicraft, and commerce could be also seen.

In order to strengthen the agricultural activities, *Sūdras* were not only granted the cultivable lands but were helped by lending money, seeds, cattles and the fiscal exemption by the state. Before the appearance of *Mahāyāna*, cultivation and cattle breeding were restrained by the *Vedic* ritualism and sacrifices. It is interesting to note that the theory of *Ahimsā* and vegetarianism of *Mahāyāna* played an important role in the development of cultivation and cattle breeding in India.

In the industrial activities, artisans and craftsmen played an important role in the production of commodities. The *Milindapannhō*, which was composed during the time of Asoka, recognizes 75 occupations. Out of to, 60 occupations were related to various kinds of crafts and the rest connected with the working of mineral products such as gold, silver, iron, jewels etc. When *Sūdras* became free from *Brahmanical* social structure, they had chance to participate in the production of commodities. It is *Mahāyāna Buddhism* that made them to become conscious of their role in the economic development. Many scholars assert that, during the period, many *Sūdras* became rich, even the economic distinctions between *Vaisyas* and *Sūdras* were difficult to make. *Mahāyāna Buddhism* was a sigh of relief for women also played an important role in economic activities along with men.

Before the appearance of *Mahāyāna*, *Brahmanism*, *Jainism*, *Hīnayāna Buddhism* were prevalent in India. During the period under study, *Mahāyāna* gave up begging for food and advocated to reside in monastery study *Mahāyāna* teachings as every monastery was granted the cultivable land by the state. The life of mendicant monks only existed from the time of the Buddha to Asoka. The periods, from the first century B.C. to sixth century A.D., the life of mendicant monks was not exalted as the urban economy required a settled life of monks.

Besides, in the *Hīnayāna* doctrine, monks were not allowed to keep money and jewels; taking one meal at midday and not allowing to contain food over night. *Mahāyāna* allowed monks to keep money, gold, diamond, silver, etc., of course within prescribed limit and to do cooking in monastery, taking three meals in a day and may also consume food over night if that food is mixed with salt. Their keeping money and other properties was not for luxurious lives but for vital needs of *Buddhism* in the age

of a developed commodity economy. Thus *Mahāyāna* opened wide the means of practice in *Buddhism*. Such developments led to disappearance of *Theravāda Buddhism* from India during the period of Guptas (4th A.D. – 6th A.D.).

Moreover, the *Hīnayāna* doctrine did not meet the need of masses during the new period in which the religious belief was emphasized. The *Hīnayāna* doctrine denied the Buddha's supernature powers and blessing. Clearly, they have distorted and wronged the spiritual side of man for they ignored the groping for the spirit after something higher. The famishing and thirsting souls sought to the spiritual satisfaction from the Buddha's supernatural power and blessing in order to placate sufferings but *Hīnayānic* atheism led despair to them.

Confronting the new challenges of religious life, *Mahāyānists* gave up the *Hīnayāna* atheism and offered to human kind a salvation by faith and wisdom.

To practise meditation, *Hīnayāna* advocated to renounce family life and social interaction to retire to a secluded spot in the forest. Such the practice certainly causes hindrances towards laities. Men, who are bustling in economic and social activities, cannot practise *Hīnayāna* meditation. This method of meditation is only for monks and nuns, who have leisure to practise it.

The purpose of *Mahāyānic* meditation is the experience and attainment of inner serenity and calm that is always in the state of *Nirvāna*. By this reason, *Mahāyānists* never ask their followers to give up their family and all social discourses to practise meditation. *Mahāyānic* meditation may be practised any time and at any place, meditator can meditate even when he is at work.

Mahāyānists offered masses two meditative methods, that is, the recitation of Amitābha's name and the utterance of *Dhāranis*. Practising these meditative methods with one mind, he can attain enlightenment and liberation.

Under influence of *Mahāyāna*, all religious activities during the period under study underwent some changes. For example, *Purānic Brahmanism (Hinduism)* started practising the idol worship, performing vegetarian sacrifice, and the practice of rite

and ceremony. The *Hīnayāna* philosophical atheism and its rigid system of doctrines were relaxed.

The advent of *Mahāyāna* made positive contributions to Indian thought and culture. From discussions in preceding chapters, it is clear that philosophy, psychology, literature, ethics and art have been influenced by *Mahāyāna Buddhism*.

Of literature, *Mahāyānists* left innumerable *sūtras* and *sāstras* that have enriched the Indian *Sanskrit* literature. Especially, *Mahāyānists* participated in Indian literature with their five literatural streams, viz. the Negative Dialectical Literature, Realistic Critical Literature, Symbolic Literature, Literature of Self-relation and Depictive Literature. These five literatural streams have influenced the works of successive religious teachers, philosophers and scholars like Gaudapanda, Saṃkara, Rāmaṇuja, etc.

Of philosophy, the doctrine of twofold truth was first expounded by Nāgārjuna and other *Mahāyānists* and then the classic *Vedānta* schools made this doctrine as the foundation of their philosophy. The *Mahāyānic* concept of Absolute also influenced the thoughts of thinkers of *Hinduism*. Especially, the concept of universe of *Mahāyāna* has been the basis of natural science of the world. The concept of liberation and the means to the liberation of *Mahāyāna* had supplemented the concept of liberation and the means to liberation of *Hīnayāna*. The concept of liberation of *Hīnayāna* is the attainment of *Nirvāna*, cutting rebirth; whereas the concept of liberation of *Mahāyāna* is the union of consciousness (soul) and the absolute *Sūnyata* and volunteering for rebirth in the suffering world in order to save living beings. Of the means to liberation, *Hīnayānists* only mention the role of wisdom; the devotion and impartial service of *Bodhisattva* are scant. Whereas *Mahāyānists* mention wisdom (*prajñā*), devotion (*bhakti*) and impartial service towards living beings (*anābhogacaryā*).

Of psychology, *Hīnayānists* and the thinkers of *Upanisads* only mention six consciousness of sense organs (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and mental consciousness). *Mahāyānists* re-expounded them and added *manas* and *ālayavijñāna*, two important factors of psychology, into *Hīnayānic* psychology in order to complete the system of *Buddhist* psychology. On the other hand, the thinkers of *Upanisads*

knew the role of *hiranyagarbha* (*ālayavijñāna* or store-house) in the creation of universe. They have not yet known its role in the individual cognition. *Yogācāris* asserted that *ālayavijñāna* or subtle body in which all habits of defilement and seeds of *karma* are contained. After death, it is *ālayavijñāna* that will be led to the mother's womb by the seeds of *karma* contained in it and out of that a new life will take shape. Without *ālayavijñāna*, no rebirth.

Of ethics, *Mahāyāna Buddhism* advocated equality of castes and tried to raise the status of women in the society. *Mahāyānists* considered caste division as a non-ethical action because any man, irrespective of caste, can become perfect. As a result, all members of society were permitted to enter into the monastic order and whosoever entered the monastic order were treated equally in the *Mahāyāna Buddhism*. S. Radhakrishnan holds that democracy is a modern motive of social reform in which *Mahāyānists* played an important role. Though *Hīnayānists* protested caste system of *Brahmanism*, at the core of their heart, they still believed that women cannot become Buddhas. *Mahāyānists* advocate that women can become Buddhas as they possess the Buddha-nature. They also advocated vegetarianism in order to stop killing animals as life is very precious. Though *Hīnayānists* do not make animal sacrifices, they are allowed to take meat, if meat is not seen, heard, and suspected to have been killed for them. The theory of *ahimsā* and vegetarianism of *Mahāyāna* influenced the practice of *Hindus*. It cannot be denied that the tenet of *ahimsā* and vegetarianism of *Hinduism* is influenced and inspired by *Mahāyāna* and the theory of *ahimsā* has become the very basis of ethical system of *Hinduism*.

Of art, before the advent of *Mahāyāna*, India did not have any image of god or that of Buddha. All architectural monuments of *Brahmanism* came into existence only after the appearance of *Mahāyāna*. Sudha Sengupta affirms that the earliest and the major number of the temples, monasteries, and caves were *Buddhistical* and *Mahāyānic* art influenced all architectural monuments of *Hinduism*. *Mahāyānic* art not only influenced the art of *Hinduism*, it also influenced *Buddhist* art in many countries in Central Asia, and South Eastern Asia.

After the sixth century A.D., *Buddhism* including *Mahāyāna* started declining and by 16th century A.D. it disappeared from India. Various reasons have been given for the decline of *Buddhism* in India. Some of these reasons given are: Assimilation of *Hindu* gods, goddesses, rites, rituals and superstitious in *Mahāyāna* religion, persecution and exclusion of *Buddhists* by various rulers; specially after revival of *Hinduism*, decline in morality of *Bhikkhus*, indiscipline and mismanagement of monasteries, Turkish invasion, so on and so forth.

The present study would not be going into the details of the factors responsible for the decline of *Buddhism* in India, as the problem situation under investigation, as its title suggest, remains focused on emergence and growth of *Mahāyāna Buddhism* (1st century B.C. to 6th century A.D.). However, a serious attempt to investigate the factors responsible for decline of *Buddhism* in India could be an interesting independent area of research.

It would be pertinent to point out here that though *Buddhism* has no longer remained an active religion in practice in India, yet these is no denial the fact that one could still sense the presence of its soul in *Hinduism* and other related practices. Its strength as an active religious practice could be seen in the countries outside India. In the present time, *Buddhism* has become a global religion; especially, *Mahāyānic* doctrines are adopted by people in many countries in the world such as China, Japan, Mongolia, Korea, Vietnam, Bhutan, Tibet, Australia, America, England, Russia, Germany, etc.

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GLOSSARY

Ātman: Ātman is essence of soul that is the highest reality and immanent in a man. It is the pure-consciousness, the self-illumination and the self-realization and always the same in any time and space. It is beyond birth and death while body is subject to birth and death. From Ātman, body, life, mind, intellect, are manifested. Ātman and Brahman are the same in their functions.

Anābhogacaryā: The service without reward. The Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas do everything for the sake of others but they never ask any one to give them any thing.

Amitabhā: Amitabhā Buddha is the lord of pure-land. Amitabhā consists of two meanings. The former is Amitābha (infinite light) and the latter is Amitāyus (Infinite life). Innumerable Kalpas ago, he was one of the sixteen sons of the Great-Universal Wisdom Excellent Buddha. And in another Kalpa, he vowed forty eight oaths to establish the pure-land in order to salve living beings from the suffering worlds.

Asanga: Asanga was the elder brother of Vasubandhu I. He followed Yogācāra school; he was born about 310 A.D. in Purusapura, Kaniska's capital in Gandhāra and died about 390 A.D. His master was Maitreyanātha, who founded the Yogācāra school about the third century A.D. Asanga wrote many books concerning to the Yogācāra philosophy and logic.

Ālayavijñāna: Ālayavijñāna consists of the internal and external worlds. In the field of universe, it is the totality of the universe or cosmic mind in which the seeds of phenomena are contained and all external objects are manifested from ālayavijñāna.

In the individual field, ālayavijñāna is considered as the subtle body or the soul of man. It is the substratum of individual cognition. In other words, from ālayavijñāna, a system of consciousness is formed. These

eight consciousness are known as five consciousness of sense organ, manovijñāna, manas, and ālayavijñāna. After death, it is ālayavijñāna which is led by karma into the mother's womb, there a new life takes shape. Tathāgatagarbha is the pure aspect of ālayavijñāna. Whenever one's mind unifies with the nature of tathāgatagarbha, ālayavijñāna or soul becomes immortal.

Abhidharmakosa: A commentary on Hīnayāna doctrine. It is attributed to Vasubandhu I, the younger brother of Asanga. It was compiled about the fourth century A.D.

Anāgāmi: The third stage of Hīnayāna Sainthood. After destroying five lower fetters, i.e. false view of existence of body, doubt, wrong precepts of custom, desire and anger, he attains this sainthood. He is considered as the Never-Returner, who is never reborn again in this world.

Arhat: The highest sainthood of Hīnayāna. After destroying five lower fetters and five higher fetters, the Anāgāmi obtains Arhatship and he is freed from the rebirths in Kāmaloka, Rūpaloka and Arūpaloka. Theravāda considers Arhat as the perfect Enlightened one but Mahāsaṅghika, Sārvastivāda, Sautrāntika, Vaibhāsika and Mahāyāna deny this concept. They hold that Arhat only attains the partial enlightenment for he just destroys the ego-sūnyatā (the emptiness of ego); he has not yet completed the dharma-sūnyata.

Asūra: A spirit that may be either good or evil. Asuras are enemies of Devas and they are the mightiest of all demons. They are one of the six classes of living beings.

Abhimukhi: The sixth stage of Mahāyānic Sainthood. He practises the perfection of wisdom. He is considered as an Anāgāmi of Hīnayāna Buddhism because he just destroys partially the ego-sūnyata and stops his rebirth in the realms of existence. The dharma-sūnyata, he has not yet destroyed completely.

Acala: Immovable stage, the eighth stage of Mahāyāna Sainthood. He practises the perfection of aspiration. He is equal with the Immovable Arhat in Hīnayāna doctrines. He just destroys completely the ego-sūnyatā and stops his rebirth in six realms of existence. He must destroy the dharma-sūnyatā completely in order to attain the Buddhahood.

Arcismāti: The fourth stage of Mahāyāna Sainthood. He practises the perfection of energy.

Avalokitesvara: He is a Bodhisattva, who practised completely the reflection on the hearing of ears and the sounds of the world. He is a symbol of loving-kindness and compassion of Buddhism. During the T'ang dynasty, he was known as a female Bodhisattva. And from the Tenth century A.D., he was called Pai I Kuan Yin (the Avalokitesvara on the white robe).

Bodhisattva: This word consists of two parts, Bodhi and Sattva. Bodhi means enlightened or wisdom; Sattva means living being or man. Bodhisattva is an enlightened one; he seeks enlightenment not only for himself but also for all living beings. He practises ten Pāramitās and he is going on the road to the Buddhahood.

Brahman: One of three gods of Hinduism, along with Viṣṇu and Siva. Brahman is not object of worship. It is also regarded as the essence of all existences. It is changeless and eternal reality. But the universe, which was manifested from it, is impermanent, changing, and destroying. Kena Upanisad says that Brahman has both sides of peaceful stability and active energizing. In the former aspect, he is Brahman (Nirguna Brahman) and in the latter aspect, he is īsvara (Saguna Brahman). He is said to create this universe with his māyā. By the force of Brahman, all things operate in their respective positions such as sun rises in the east and sets in the west; the moon appears in the night-time and sun in the day-time. And all things spring from Brahman, exist in Brahman and

after their dissolutions they return back to Brahman. Sometimes Brahman is considered as ātman because they are the absolute realities.

Brahmaloka: Brahmaloka is one of the sixteen worlds of Rūpaloka (the worlds of Form). It is the highest world of three worlds of the First Meditation. One, who attained the fourth stage of meditation in the world of man, after death, will be reborn in the Brahma world. In Brahma worlds, living beings live by their energies of meditation without eating food. They enjoy their life-span for one assamkheyya (innumerable years).

Brahma Nirvāna: Brahmanirvāna is the ontological nirvāna or the self-nature or essence of all existences. It is equivalent with the absolute nirvāna or sūnyatā of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Brahmana or Brahmin: Bramana was the priestly caste; the highest of the four castes in the society of ancient India.

Buddha-nature: It is bright substance in every sentient being. It is called sūnyatā, Nirvāna, thusness, etc.

Buddha-vehicle: It is also called the One vehicle. The teachings of three vehicles are only temporary expedients made necessary by the diversity of temperament among the Buddha's disciples as well as by their varying degrees of spiritual developments. In reality, there is only one-vehicle or Buddha-vehicle.

Bhūmis: Bhūmis are the stages of Sainthood. The Mahāyāna Bhūmis consists of twelve stages of Sainthood, and they are divided into two groups. The former group is called 'the previous stages of Bodhisattva' or The Bodhisattvas of lower knowledge. The stage includes eight bhūmis, viz. The Pramuditā (joyful stage), Vimalā (pure-stage), Prabhākārī (illuminating stage), Arcismāti (Radiant stage), Sudurjayā (very-difficult to-conquer), Abhimukhī (stage of face-to-face), Dūrangama (Far going or Far reaching), Acalā (Immovable stage).

The latter group is the higher stage of Bodhisattva. The group consists of four stages, viz, Sādhumatī (stage of the good thought), Dharma-meghā (cloud of virtue), Nirupamā (equalled enlightenment) and Jñānavatī (Buddhahood).

Eight previous stages of Mahāyāna Bodhisattva (Pramuditā, Vimalā, Prabhakarī, Arcismāti, Sudurjayā, Abhimukhī, Durangama, Acalā) are equivalent with eight stages of Hīnayāna Sainthood (Sotāpanna magga, Sotāpanna phala, Sakadāgāmi magga, Sakadāgāmi phala, Anagāmi magga, Anagāmi phala, Arhat magga and Arhat phala). The later four stages of Mahāyāna, viz Sādhumatī, Dharma-meghā, Nirupamā and Jñānavatī are not equivalent with Hīnayāna Sainthoods. An Arhat can practise these four stages in order to attain Buddhahood.

Consciousness: There are many meanings of consciousness. In the field of Nature, consciousness is considered as the seeds of phenomena that are contained in ālayavijñāna (the totality of universe) from which all material objects are created.

In the field of individual cognition, it includes eight consciousness, that are, visual consciousness, auditory consciousness, olfactory consciousness, gustatory consciousness, bodily consciousness, manovijñāna, manas, and ālayavijñāna. Hīnayānists only mention six consciousnesses (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, bodily and mental consciousnesses). Manas and ālayavijñāna are not found in the Hīnayāna psychology.

Dhāranis: A spell or incantation is said to protect man, who recites it and it can benefit others by virtue of its mystic power.

Dharma: It consists of two meanings; the former is the Buddha's teachings that were collected in the Tripitaka and the latter is the phenomenal things.

Deer park: A park in Benares (Skt. Varanasi) where the Buddha preached his first sermon to the five mendicant monks (Ajnatakaundinya, Asvajit, Vashpa, Mahānamam, and Bhadrīka shortly after his enlightenment).

Dharmakāya: Dharmakāya is the body of law. It is identical with Nirguna Brahman in the Upanisads. It is also the absolute reality, from which all phenomenal things are created, existed and returned back to it when they are destroyed. It is inner essence that constitutes the enlightenment. Without it, the Buddha could not attain the Buddhahood.

Five desire: The desire that arises from the contact of the five sense organs, i.e. eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and thought. Sometimes five desires are defined as the desire for wealth, sex, food, fame and sleep.

Five obstacles: Five limitations set forth in Hīnayāna teachings that women face in their religious practice. To this view, a woman can never become a Brahma heavenly king, can never become the lord of Shakra, can never become a devil king, can never become a wheel Turning Sage King, and never become a Buddha. In the twelfth chapter of the Lotus sūtra, this view is refuted.

Five aggregates: The five Skandhas, the elements or attributes of which every human being is constituted (1) Form or body, (2) receptivity, sensation, feeling, (3) conception, (4) volition or various mental activities, (5) consciousness.

Five parts of Dharmakāya: The dharmakāya is made by precepts (sīla), meditation (dhyāna), wisdom (prajñā), emancipation (moksa) and emancipation of knowledge.

Five transcendent faculties: (1) the celestial eyes, (2) the celestial ears, (3) the knowledge of the minds of others, (4) the destiny of the karma abode (knowledge of all former lives of oneself and others), (5) freedom of will. And there is also a sixth transcendent faculty, the elimination of faults (supernatural knowledge of the finality or end of all fault).

Hīnayāna: Small vehicle or the uncomplete means. The teachings that leads cultivator from the first stage to eighth stage of Bodhisattva or from Sotapanna to Immovable Arhat is called Hīnayāna doctrine.

Hīnayāna Buddhism consists of Theravāda, Mahīśāsakas, Sarvastivāda, Vātsīputriyas, Dharmottaras, Bhadrāyanikas, Sammitiya, Sannagarika, Dharmaguptas, Kāśyapiyas, Sautrāntika and Vaibhāsika.

Kalpa: Kalpa or eon is the period during which a physical universe formed and destroyed. There are small, medium, and great Kalpa. Kalpa is also explained as the period during which the human life-span increases by one year in every hundred years from 10 to 84,000 then decreases at the same rate from 84,000 to 10. Twenty small Kalpas constitute a medium Kalpa, and four medium Kalpas constitute a great Kalpa.

Mahāyāna: Mahāyāna is the great vehicle or the highest means or the complete doctrine. There are five reasons, that the new movement of Buddhism is called Mahāyāna.

- (1) Universal salvation is the kernel of it. It is large enough to carry all beings to the absolute nirvāna or real happiness. It invites all to aspire for the highest goal of the Buddhahood without exception of laity.
- (2) Its look-out is broad and its aim is infinitely great like the infinite sky. The idea of Bodhisattva is the hall-mark of Mahāyāna.
- (3) Mahāyāna mentions both the conventional truth (samvrti satyam) and the absolute truth (paramārtha satyam).
- (4) Its capacity can accommodate various religious beliefs and popular practice.
- (5) Sanskrit language, the divine language of scriptures, was used for its writings.

Māyā: Māyā has three meanings:

- (1) the power of God. Upanisads hold that God created the universe with his māyā, without māyā God did nothing.

- (2) The impermanence, changing and destroying of the universe are known as māyā. Upanisads state that God is eternal and unchanging but the universe was created by him is impermanent.
- (3) Ignorance is the third meaning of māyā. One, who lives in ignorance, he is certainly suffering, sorrow, grief and lamentation. Having realized the real nature of all things, one's ignorance is removed and the final liberation is attained.

Madhyamika: Madhyamika is one of Mahāyāna schools. The school was established by Rahurabhadra in the second century A.D. Nāgārjuna was not a founder of the school, he only systematized and developed the idea of Madhyamika that was founded by his master Rahurabhadra. Nāgārjuna, Nāgārbodhi, Āryadeva, Candrakirti, Santideva, etc were the exponents of the school.

Means to the final liberation: Means to the final liberation, according to the Upanisads, Saddharmapuṇḍarīka and Lankāvatāra sūtras, are gyanyoga or prajñā (wisdom), Bhaktiyoga or bhakti (devotion) and Karmayoga or anābhogavarya (service without reward).

Maitreya: Maitreya is a Bodhisattva. He is called Ajitā. It is said that he will become a Buddha after the Sakya Buddha. He was not the founder of Yogācāra school.

Maitreya-nātha: He was Asang's master, who founded the Yogācāra school in the third century A.D. Some scholars have misunderstood that the Yogācāra school was founded by Bodhisattva Maitreya, the future Buddha, staying in the Tusita heaven. And they further believed that Vasubandhu used his super-nature power went to Tusita heaven to learn the doctrine of Yogācāra from Bodhisattva Maitreya. In fact, Vasubandhu learned the doctrine of Yogācāra from his master Manonatha.

Nirvāna: Nirvāna means 'blown out'. It is the state in which one has escaped from the circle of birth and death. Two kinds of Nirvāna in Hīnayāna

doctrine are phenomenal or the relative nirvāna. The Upādhisesa and Anupādhisesa in the Hīnayāna doctrine are equivalent with jīvanmukti and Videhamukti in the Upanisads. These states of pure spirit are not the final liberation. The final liberation is the union between one's mind and ātman or self-nature that is inherent legacy of him. The ontological Nirvāna is equivalent with the Brahma- Nirvāna in the Upanisads.

Mind: Mind is described by the different levels. Upanisads regard manas as mind that is the discriminating perception. In Hīnayāna doctrine, mind is said to include the five perceptions of sense organs and mental consciousness. But in the Mahāyāna doctrine, mind consists of the true mind and thinking mind. The true mind is essence of mind or the substratum of eight consciousnesses. This ontological mind is called by many names in the Mahāyāna sūtras such as tathāgata, original bodhi, dharmakāya, sūnyatā, etc. The thinking mind consists of discriminations of eight consciousnesses (ālayavijñāna, manas, manovijñāna and five consciousness of sense organ).

The Yogācāris assert that manas in the Upanisads is not mind, it is a part of mind because it is not the organ of perception; it is only the organ that produces affection and willing. Thus, mind, according to Yogācāra school, is a system of eight consciousness and its pure essence.

Jīva: Jīva or soul is the subtle body or living force of man. Soul is the enjoyer of the result of past karma as well as the doer of new karma. Jīva suffers sorrow, sufferings, grief and lamentation. By the power of past karma, after death of man, his soul is led to the mother's womb there Jīva combines with the material elements left by father in the womb of mother and a new life is formed there.

Having obtained nirvāna, his soul becomes pure and it is not led by karma to rebirth again. The terms such as patisandhivijñāna, pudgala,

consciousness, ālayavijñāna, etc in Buddhism are equivalent with Jīva or soul in the Upanisads.

Six realms of existence: The heavenly worlds, the world of man, Hells, Asūras, hungry ghosts and animals.

Sūnyatā: Sūnyatā consists of two levels – phenomenal Sūnyatā and ontological Sūnyatā. All the impermanence, changing and destroying of the conditioned things are called phenomenal Sūnyatā or relative Sūnyatā. And the eternal essence of all conditioned things is also called the absolute Sūnyatā or the self-nature or dharma-nature. Hīnayāna doctrines only mention the relative Sūnyatā. It means that all things are impermanent and selfless. Whereas Mahāyāna doctrines mention both the relative and absolute Sūnyatās. Mahāyānists assert that though all conditioned things are impermanent, changing, and destroying, their essence is eternal and unchanging. The ontological Sūnyatā is the property of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It is equivalent with Brahman or ātman in the Upanisads.

Three levels of knowledge: The Lankāvatāra sūtra gives three levels of knowledge, that is, sensual perception (parikalpita), logic perception (paratantra) and intuition (parinishpana).

Truth: There are two levels of truth, that is, the absolute truth (paramārtha satya) and the relative truth or conventional truth (samvṛti satya). The absolute truth is the real-nature or essence of all conditioned things. It is beyond the cause and conditions, it exists forever. Brahman or ātman in the Upanisads and dharmakāya, Sūnyatā, self-nature, dharma-nature in Mahāyāna doctrine are considered as the absolute truth or essence of all things. The conventional truth is attributed to all external objects, which are created by causality, are impermanent, changing, and destroying. Moreover, all Hīnayāna doctrines such as Four Noble truths, the theory

of Dependent Origination, rebirth, karma, etc are known as the conventional truths because they are made by cause and conditions.

Upanisad: Upanisads are the end parts of Vedas or the essence of Vedas. There are 108 Upanisads but there are only eighteen principal Upanisads. The date of Upanisads is known from 900 B.C. to 1500 A.D. The old Upanisads came to existence from 900 B.C. to 300 A.D. The old Upanisads mention the philosophy whereas the new upanisads, which came from 300 A.D. to 1500 A.D., told about the religious ceremonies, and the worship of Siva, Viṣṇu, Sati, Durga, etc. The philosophical elements are not mentioned a lot in the new Upanisads.

Vasubandhu: It is said that there were two Vasubandhus lived in the age of Guptas. The former was Vasubandhu I, Asanga's younger brother, the author of Abhidharmakośa, who was converted to Mahāyānism by Asanga, lived at Purusapura (Kaniska's capital) in Gandhara during the time 320 A.D. to 400 A.D. This Vasubandhu was patronized by king Samudragupta. The latter was Vasubandhu II, who was Dinnāga's master, lived in Ayodhyā during the time from 455 A.D. to 520 A.D. This Vasubandhu was patronized by Skandagupta (456-467 A.D.).

Yogācāra: Yogācāra school was established by Maitreyanātha, Asanga's master, in the third century A.D. Some scholars have misunderstood that Bodhisattva Maitreya, the future Buddha, founded the Yogācāra school. Even some scholars assert that Vasubandhu and Asanga founded the Yogācāra school. All the above views are certainly wrong for the Yogācāra school was established by Maitreyanātha in the third century A.D.

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